FASHIONABLE

INVOLVEMENTS:

A

NOVEL.

BY

MRS. GUNNING

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY D. GRAISBERRY,

FOR P. WOGAN, P. BYRNE, W. PORTER, J. RICE,

AND G. FOLINGSBY.

1800.

'89.02112

Faſhionable Involvements.

CHAP. I.

TETE-A-TETE.

THE moſt faſhionable couple about town being prevented from ſleeping by ſome domeſtic crotchets running in their heads, of which they wiſhed to diveſt themſelves, accidentally met in the breakfaſt-room at an unuſual early hour, it being not one o'clock. Yes, Reader, it was really no more than one hour after mid-day! No wonder then they ſhould ſtart at the ſight of each other as if they had ſeen a ſpectre, as they iſſued from their ſeparate apartments; but politeneſs very ſoon obtained a complete victory over ſurprize; all the enquiries poſſible were mutually made with ſuch perfect good breeding, as ſhewed they wanted nothing in the world but ſincerity to make them paſs for affectionate ſolicitude.

Lady

Lady Iſleworth carried a ſmile on her face and a ſcroll of paper in her hand, which laying careleſsly on the table, ſhe prepared to fill out the tea.

Sir Frederick took up a newſpaper, but his eyes often reverted with a glance of ſuſpicion towards the manuſcript he ſaw lying by the ſide of his lady, the ſubject of which he probably gueſſed, therefore aſked no queſtions, but ſaid, in a diſſatisfied tone, "Where are the girls?—I am ſurprized, Lady Iſleworth, *you* give yourſelf the trouble of doing theſe ſort of dull offices, when you have ſo many daughters who may take them off your hands."

"O, my dear," returned her Ladyſhip, "you have ſurely forgot that we have none of them at home, except the two young ones, who I ſuppoſe, are at their leſſons; and Miſs Iſleworth did not go to bed till ſix this morning, of courſe we muſt not expect to ſee her till dinner time: I wiſh the poor thing may not be in a decline; ſhe looks frightfully pale; and as ſoon as the town thins, it will be proper, I think, to ſend her into the country, that ſhe may get up her ſleep, and by that means recover her complexion."

"But, if you ſuppoſe the change of air ſo neceſſary to the reſtoration of her health, why wait till

till the town thins? why not put your deſign in execution immediately."

"Oh! for Heaven's ſake, do not mention ſuch a propoſition; it would abſolutely kill her at once; yes, it would be her death; there is ſuffocation in the very thoughts of the country at this ſeaſon of the year. You ſee ſhe is yet capable of a *great* deal; ſhe has not been in bed any night this three weeks, at the earlieſt hour, till three in the morning. I did not mean to alarm you by ſaying ſhe looked pale; I hardly know how I came to make the obſervation, only that I think it odious to be without colour; if ſhe would put on rouge there might be no occaſion for her going into the country at all; but ſhe is ſo refractory to my commands, when I bid her try the experiment, that ſhe poſitively *ſhall* go there one day or other, as ſhe deſerves to be puniſhed for her diſobedience."

The whole time her Ladyſhip had been delivering this maternal harangue, the half negligent, half oppreſſed Baronet, ſeemed to be more plunged in ſilent meditation, than devoting his attention either to the matter or the ſubject of her eloquence—a momentary pauſe enſued, when ſuddenly ſtarting from his reverie, he cried out—

"Pray

"Pray, my dear, do you never intend to viſit Mrs. Snug?"

"Mrs. *Snug!*" repeated his Lady, with a ſtrongiſh ſort of emphaſis, "how, in the name of wonder, has her idea intruded on our family affairs?"

"Family affairs!—Oh, yes, true, child, we were talking of family affairs; and now that you have renewed the ſubject, I muſt tell you that they are in a d—d bad condition."

"How can *that* be poſſible!—Do you really admire this grave ſort of jeſting?—For my part, I have not cleverneſs enough to underſtand it—however, do not let us dwindle into the *diſagreeables*. You was talking of Mrs. Snug; ſhe is a mighty pretty kind of woman; I wonder ſhe has never been at any of my parties; for, indeed, and indeed, I ſent my name and my days to her houſe, when you firſt hinted it to me that you had entered into a ſort—of a ſort—of a *friendly* intimacy with her huſband."

A ſmile of encouragement emboldened Sir Frederick to requeſt the invitation might be repeated, being convinced that by ſome negligence or other her former compliment never reached the

the hand of Mrs. Snug, as he had heard her declare very lately there was *no* perſon in the world whoſe acquaintance ſhe was ſo ambitious of attaining as that of Lady Iſleworth.

CHAP. II.

TETE-A-TETE CONTINUED.

ANOTHER full pauſe, apparently important to both parties, immediately followed the Baronet's eager entreaties, and the Lady's *chearful* acquieſcence; yet this ſilence was not at laſt interrupted by any obſervation that ſeemed the effect of conſideration.—"I am thinking," ſaid the former, "that you are a dear delightful creature, the moſt obliging wife in the univerſe; and what a loſs the world *muſt* ſuſtain, if my curſed involvements ſhould force me to withdraw you from the participation of its elegant pleaſures?"

"And I am thinking," retorted his fairer and better half, "that you are enough to give one the vapours; I have to talk with you when

you get into a philoſophical humour—Can't you let your involvements alone to diſentangle themſelves?—Did you ever know a man of ſix thouſand a year that *does*, or *ought* to trouble himſelf about his involvements?"

"Faith, that is a rational conceit; but, nevertheleſs, I tell you Madam, we are ruined."

"Ruined with ſix thouſand a year!—Piſh! you are now perfectly provoking."

"Six thouſand a year has a good ſound, but when five of them are ſunk in annuities can you tell me how a man is to make up the deficiency?"

"Lord, Sir Frederick! you talk very nonſenſically; nothing is more eaſy! Why don't you get Arthur to cut off the entail? he is a fine ſpirited youth, and I dare ſay will do it with a great deal of pleaſure."

"I ſhall certainly try him, my dear," ſaid the Baronet: "but, in the mean time, would it not be *as* well, if you was to give up your jointure? I think that would help us a little."

"Take it then, by all means," replied her good-natured ladyſhip;" "you have only to get the

the conſent of my truſtees, and mine follows of courſe."

"What an angel!" exclaimed the tranſported huſband, kiſſing her hands with well-affected rapture; "you have ſet the veſſel right again; and there will be no immediate neceſſity of ſpeaking to Arthur about the entail: we may keep that in reſerve, at leaſt until we can no longer contrive to go on without his aſſiſtence, I will ſee Bateman and Curry this very morning, and ſend them both to the devil, if they heſitate an inſtant in giving up their truſt to your ſettlement."

"As to Curry," replied her ladyſhip, "it requires ſome addreſs to manage that old fogram; you know, he took it into his head to be affronted when I forbid him the houſe, becauſe the fool would give his advice unaſked. However, I am glad to ſee your ſpirits getting above par. But remember, Sir Frederick, when my dirty acres are converted into caſh, that *wives*, as well as *huſbands*, have their little *faſhionable* occaſions. Here is a liſt," taking up the paper, which till now had remained quietly on the table, where ſhe had laid it on her firſt entrance; "you had better look it over, my dear, and you will find the articles contained in theſe memorandums to be

be mere *neceſſaries*, which I cannot *poſſibly* do without: the purchaſe of them, as near as I can gueſs, from expenditures of the ſame nature, will rather exceed fifteen hundred pounds, and a compliment of two thouſand will leave me very much your debtor."

Now, as the neceſſaries of a lady of ton would not be univerſally underſtood by all claſſes of readers, though we were even to produce this liſt of memorandums, plainly as they were there made out, ſo we ſhall no more unfold the myſtical paper that contained them than did Sir Frederick, who, returning it unopened, politely aſſured her ladyſhip, whatever part of the money ſhe appropriated to her own uſe would receive a double value in his eſtimation.

Parting in the moſt undefinable harmony, they appointed to meet again half an hour before Lady Iſleworth's company aſſembled, to talk over his ſucceſs with her two truſtees, though he appeared quite certain they could form no objection to an arrangement ſo well digeſted, and ſo *exceſſively* reaſonable.

CHAP. III.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

LADY ISLEWORTH, at fourteen, was a romp—at fifteen, a wife—and at ſixteen, a mother; which is all the apology we are at preſent inclined to make for having introduced her at the age of thirty-ſeven, the diſſipated miſtreſs of an almoſt ruined family. Her other qualifications will unfold themſelves as occaſion ſhall offer.

Sir Frederick could boaſt no greater advantage over his lady, but that of being in age four years her ſenior; of which preference, it may be ſo called, the incoherence of all his purſuits ſpoke him totally inſenſible. Whilſt children themſelves, they were the parents of children, which at firſt they conſidered merely as play-things; but afterwards, ſuppoſing them to be at leaſt as rational as themſelves, they were diligently initiated into all the wiſdom of their wiſe parents, and as they grew up, no reſtrictions were laid either on their pleaſures or expence; ſo that by the time Arthur, their eldeſt ſon, had eſcaped minority, the ready money fortune of fifty thouſand pounds, brought by Lady Iſleworth to her huſband, had every ſhilling been ſquandered; beſides

beſides that the *diſcreet* father, of this equally *diſcreet* ſon, having loaded his eſtates with annuities more than they could bear:—two jointures alone remained untouched, one of which was daily and anxiouſly expected to fall in, becauſe it hung on the life of a very old woman. From the other ſacred depoſit Sir Frederick could form no reaſonable expectations of preſent advantage, as it depended on the death of his own dear lady, who was even younger than himſelf.

Sir Frederick never found his difficulties ſo numerous and ſo preſſing as at the opening of this hiſtory. He had promiſed a conſiderable loan to Mr. Snug, whoſe wife, as every good wife ſhould do, took a very tender intereſt in all the concerns of her huſband, and had herſelf condeſcended to ſolicit the loan. It was impoſſible the Baronet ſhould refuſe ſo fair a ſuitor, and yet it appeared ten times more impoſſible that he ſhould ever be able to fulfil his liberal engagements.

How Lady Iſleworth diſpoſed of herſelf between the hours of parting from and meeting again with Sir Frederick, would be very little to the purpoſe; but her eagerneſs to know the reſult of his application to her truſtees, muſt not be paſſed over in ſilence: her curioſity and anxiety

ty on this occaſion was of ſo torturing a nature, that even the duties of her toilet were in a manner neglected—it might be ſaid, that ſhe rather ſuffered than enjoyed them; ſhe would fix her eyes on her looking-glaſs, without admiring her charms, or even ſeeming to know that they were reflected before her; many of her ornaments were forgotten, and the reſt ill-adjuſted. Twenty times had ſhe ſent to enquire if Sir Frederick was come home, and a long train of repeated negatives ſerved only to increaſe her large ſtock of diſcompoſure.

When Lady Iſleworth ſignified her apprehenſions, that Mr. Curry would withhold his conſent to the diſpoſal of her jointure, on account of ſome offence which ſhe acknowledged to have given him, ſhe had other reaſons, beſides thoſe ſhe choſe to advance, for more than *doubting* the ſucceſs of her huſband's negociation. Let us ſee, then, from what cauſe theſe hidden fears originated, and dig to the very root of that evil from whence ſprung her ladyſhip's plentiful ſtock of impatience.

Mr. Ludlow, the father of Lady Iſleworth, lived long enough for the advancement of his daughter, to ſee her the wife of Sir Frederick, and died ſoon enough to avoid being the witneſs

of

of her deſtruction. He was what is commonly called a *careful* parent, for he never would take a ſecond wife. He accumulated a vaſt fortune by trade, one moiety of which he gave the Baronet on the day of marriage, and the other reſigned two years after, when called upon to take his laſt journey; at which period he had acquired ſo much inſight into their mutual paſſion for expence, that again he evinced himſelf the *careful* father, for he bequeathed the remaining fifty thouſand that he left behind him to the ſole diſpoſal of his daughter, without cutting off his ſon-in-law from the uſe of the yearly intereſt this large ſum may produce. He was alſo a *careful* father, when he united, for her ſettlement in truſt, two gentlemen, who, in the whole courſe of their lives, he had never known to be united in the ſame opinion. Curry was in reality what Bateman only appeared to be: one was an honeſt man on *all* occaſions; the other ſometimes acted *like* an honeſt man, but not unleſs it would anſwer the purpoſe of his intereſt as well, or better, than playing the knave; and if we take this his real character for our clue, we ſhall find it the leſs difficult to develope the cauſe of certain myſterious tranſactions that we are going to lay before our readers, and which had for many years been paſſing between Bateman and his ward Lady Iſleworth.

At

At various times, and on various emergencies, her ladyſhip had applied to this *Jew* Chriſtian for certain ſums of money; but the ſecurity Sir Frederick could not poſſibly join in, becauſe he never was conſulted on the buſineſs. Though ſmall the ſums, the frequency with which they were demanded, and the number of years they had been rolling on in a tide of accumulation, made them at length amount to ſomething ſo conſiderable, that beſides leaving in his rapacious hands all her valuable jewels, whilſt they were cunningly copied in paſte, of ſuch exquiſite workmanſhip as to defy the ſcrutiny of a huſband's examination, this *wiſe* guardian inſiſted on *additional* ſecurity; and having nothing better to offer, the uſurer accepted an obligation, properly executed to receive, on the death of Sir Frederick, double the conſideration of the whole debt ſhe had incurred; or in caſe ſhe ſhould not be the ſurvivor, he took care, by a deed of gift that his fooliſh ward would reimburſe his family at the ſame laviſh rate, for his profuſion of generoſity in ſo freely adminiſtering to her extravagancies.

Thus ſituated, Lady Iſleworth would certainly never have conſented to Sir Frederick's application, but for fear her refuſal might occaſion certain queſtions, which might lead to certain expla-

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explanations, by no means deſirable. She therefore ſubmitted with a good grace, flattering herſelf with this only conſolation, that Bateman, for his own ſake, would not betray the engagements into which ſhe had entered. But, alas! whatever ſatisfaction might have been reaped from her ſafety in reſpect to the fear of detection, met with a counterpoiſe, in the fuller certainty, that for his *own* ſake alſo, Bateman would never be prevailed upon to relinquiſh his truſt. On the one hand ſhe was aſſailed by ſhame, yet ſhame was not the moſt terrible of her enemies; for on the other a fiend ſtill more ugly preſented itſelf—the ſpectre of ſolitude was a thouſand times leſs tolerable.

Until this morning, her ladyſhip had been ſo buſy in deranging her own affairs, that it is little to be wondered at if ſhe had never troubled herſelf about what belonged to the affairs of her huſband. This was really the caſe: for when told that morning they were in a bad condition, ſhe was ſurpriſed; but the threat which accompanied the diſcovery, of dragging her from a town reſidence, added terror to ſurpriſe; and at a moment ſo peculiar, ſhe would willingly have ſacrificed every obſtacle which ſtood in the way of Sir Frederick's views on that part of her fortune her father had ſo prudently locked up; there

there was no penance ſhe would not have performed, to avoid the bittereſt of all calamities, that of being forced to exchange the dear diſtraction of a town life for a dull, ſleepy, country retirement. Her pin-money, it muſt here be confeſſed, was very rich in arrears, which had been a ſort of ſtumbling-block in her road to pleaſure. Whenever ſhe applied to the ſteward, he would gravely refer her ladyſhip to his maſter, who would as gravely, though not ſo reſpectfully, refer her to the devil. Now, whether it was that ſhe did not like to put him out of humour, or that Mr. Bateman's ſupplies ſaved her from the neceſſity of reiterated importunities, certain it is, that for many years ſhe had left off ſpeaking to Sir Frederick on the ſubject, till debts of all deſcriptions, particularly thoſe of *honour*, forced her to reſolve on breaking ſilence, and ſetting out her claims.—Thus determined, with a ſcroll of paper in her hand, on which was ſketched an exact meaſure of all her demands, and full of confidence in his capability of diſcharging them, we have ſeen her meet him at the breakfaſt table, where, having alſo witneſſed whatever paſſed between them on that interview, we proceed to another of no leſs importance.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

MORE FAMILY AFFAIRS.

TWENTY and nine times had Lady Iſleworth ſent Harris, her woman, to enquire if Sir Frederick was returned: but before the thirtieth could be diſpatched, her heart palpitated at receiving an invitation from himſelf, to meet him in one of the inner drawing-rooms.

When the meſſage was brought up, Mrs. Harris was in the act of ſpreading over her lady's ſhoulders a profuſion of long light hair, hanging from a well turned head, the chief merit of which conſiſted in the cultivation of this captivating ornament. Inſtantaneouſly ſhe broke from the hands of her Abigail, and immediately took her giddy girliſh flight down ſtairs, but, turning about before ſhe reached the bottom, ſhe ſtopped, and called out for Harris; "Go," ſaid ſhe, "and tell Miſs Iſleworth, ſhe is not to expect I ſhall carry my indulgence to ſuch prepoſterous lengths, as to let her mope away all the evening in her chamber, whilſt I am killing myſelf with fatigue in forming little fooliſh parties at whiſt and

and cribbage—ſay it is her *duty* to eaſe me of this unprofitable trouble. Do you hear me, Harris?"

"Yes, my lady."

"And tell her, my faro will not ſet late to-night; or if it ſhould, and her head continues to ache, ſo that ſhe *cannot* keep out of her bed, I ſhall diſmiſs her before it breaks up." She ſtayed to ſay no more, but hurried on to meet her huſband, trying, as ſhe paſſed along, to fortify her ſpirits againſt the *very* worſt that might happen: a precaution by no means unneceſſary. Had ſhe not been armed to encounter diſappointment, the firſt glance ſhe caught of Sir Frederick muſt have conquered all that yet remained unconquered of hope and expectation.

He was ſitting on the edge of a card-table, his looks vacant and ſullen; he was alſo whiſtling a certain doleful air, which his lady had often obſerved he never attempted, but on the ſtrongeſt fits of ſulkineſs or paſſion; one of the packs of cards that lay on the table, he was trying to turn to his amuſement, by toſſing it up with his right hand and catching it again with his left, a ſort of manual exerciſe which he managed ſo adroitly, that with ſafety he might have taken a bett to any amount, that he would not throw out one turn

turn in a thouſand, had any man, with ſpirit equal to his own, offered him the temptation; but, alas! had he looked round for ſuch a *bon vivant*, he would have ſeen only his *wife* ſtanding before him, who, with the beſt inclinations for gaming, had nothing to loſe.

Her ladyſhip pauſed for a moment, contemplating, with a mixture of ſurpriſe and pleaſure, the velocity and truth of his throws, ſeeming to loſe, in admiration of his dexterity, all ſolid conſiderations; till, rouſed from the tranſient raptures of forgetfulneſs, by ſeeing him daſh the cards from one end of the room to the other, and hearing him crying out in a voice of thunder, "What the devil madə you ſend me on a fool's errand?"

"A fool's errand!" ſhe retorted, with ſome warmth, "why ſurely, my dear, you went on your *own* errand; you wiſhed to make the application —I gave my conſent, and devoutly wiſhed you ſucceſs; therefore, if you have failed in obtaining it, the fault you know cannot be *mine*, our unlucky ſtars are alone to blame; and indeed I do think of late we have been mighty unfortunate."

"This is fine talking, Lady Iſleworth; but it will not do—it will not blind me to the confounded arts of your ſex. You have *certainly* entered

entered into a conſpiracy with that raſcal Bateman; or why, at the firſt mention of the affair, did he bluntly tell me you never *did*, would, or could expect *his* ſanction to *ſo* abſurd a propoſition? Zounds, Madam! how would he have dared to uſe me thus, if, by ſome private means, you had not put him on his guard, and encouraged his inſolence?"

Lady Iſleworth felt herſelf blameleſs of the accuſation laid to her charge. She well enough underſtood in what manner to conſtrue Bateman's firm rejection of her huſband's propoſal; it was no more than ſhe expected; but, conſcious of no *new* duplicity, and ſatisfied that what ſhe formerly practiſed had not tranſpired, ſhe very ſoon convinced Sir Frederick of the fallacy on which his ſuſpicions were founded, ſhe offered to go the next day, to try what her own intereſt would do with this ſtubborn guardian; upon which he begged her pardon, and confeſſed himſelf aſhamed that he had ever doubted her ſincerity.

Domeſtic harmony was thus reſtored to its uſual ſtandard. But the Baronet's vivacity continuing rather below par, his amiable moiety exerted all her infantine playfulneſs to conjure away his ſpleen;—ſhe talked of Mrs. Snug, of ſuppers

pers, of dinners, of operas, plays, maſquerades, of every thing but their *own* neceſſities; in ſhort, ſhe accommodated her ſubjects ſo well to his humour, that it is probable he might have buried, at leaſt for that night, the remembrance of all his diſappointments, if the mention of Mrs. Snug had not kept them ſwimming on the ſurface of his memory—to Mrs. Snug he had promiſed five hundred pounds, and in the preſent ſituation of affairs he might as well have promiſed her five hundred millions.

In the midſt of her ladyſhip's inceſſant efforts to pleaſe and amuſe him, he ſtarted on his legs, and turning three times round upon his heel with the grace of a Veſtris, he aſked her this plain queſtion—"What are we to do, if that curſed Bateman holds to his text?"

CHAP. V.

THE ANSWER.

"WHAT are we to do!" ſhe replied, laughing, "ſurely that can occaſion no great puzzle. How

How do other people of faſhion manage in the time of ſcarcity? Let us follow their example; and, by appearing more ſplendid than ever, give the world no room to make ill-natured remarks. It is only your poor ſpiritleſs beings that are proper objects of ridicule, who, afraid of their ſhadows, renounce the appearance of affluence, when they no longer poſſeſs the reality; firſt drops one footman from behind the carriage, then a butler is miſſed at the ſide-board; ſoon after, perhaps, the porter is diſlodged from his hall, and a trolloping maid-ſervant opens the door to tell us nobody is at home! Nay more, I have myſelf known an inſtance, where a lady of *this* deſcription, before ſhe was *half* ruined, ſold her own four coach horſes, and now jobs only a pair. But theſe are *rare* inſtances; I cannot name many of them; I profeſs, that for one ſuch I will produce a hundred who, the poorer they are the better they live."

"Well, well," cried Sir Frederick, rather impatiently, "all this may be true; but money I want, and money I muſt have."

"Lord!" replied her ladyſhip, "I forgot to aſk if you had been with old Curry, and what he ſaid to you."

"Said!—why he too gave me a flat refuſal, though rather in more civil terms than that ſcoundrel, Bateman,"

"Well, I proteſt I did not expect this of Curry; I thought, though we had quarrelled with him, he would very willingly have done ſuch a *little* matter to oblige us; but never fear, for when I talk with them to morrow, my hopes are extremely ſanguine that I ſhall bring them both into a better temper."

"To tell you the truth," returned Sir Frederick, "I have no notion that either of them will ever be brought to a ſenſe of their incorrible impertinence, ſo I think you had better let them alone; and as they deny their conſent, I know an honeſt Jew who may put us in the way of doing the buſineſs, without their privity or approbation."

"How monſtrous convenient!" exclaimed Lady Iſleworth.

Sir Frederick ſhook his head—"Why yes," ſaid he, "but it muſt be done to a great diſadvantage

vantage, I ſhall not pocket more than one-fifth of its value."

"Piſh! never mind that," returned the lady, "we ſhall be well off to have money, at any rate; one thouſand pounds *now* is, in my opinion, a thouſand degrees better than five times five when one has leſs occaſion for money. Poſitively, at all events, we muſt not degrade ourſelves; any ſort of infringment on our preſent mode of living is abſolutely impoſſible! Can you conceive the diſgrace which muſt be the conſequence of our condeſcending to the little *pitiful* practices of frugality?"

Her ladyſhip was thus proceeding, with ſtrongly marked energy of expreſſion, when the flood-gates of her eloquence ſuddenly, cloſed on a ſervant's coming into the room, who informed his maſter, that a perſon juſt arrived expreſs from Bath deſired to ſee him, having buſineſs of importance to communicate. The admittance of this ſtranger was accordingly ordered; and Sir Frederick exclaimed, "I'll lay fifty pounds to a ſhilling my aunt Bridget is going to be troubleſom again."

"Well, Sir," ſeeing the man enter as he ſpoke the laſt word, "what is your important buſineſs with me?"

"I am by profeſſion, Sir, an undertaker, and juſt arrived from Bath, very humbly to offer you my ſervices."

"I have no occaſion for your ſervices," ſaid Sir Frederick, angrily.

"I am ſorry, very ſorry indeed, Sir, to find that you are already engaged; I thought I ſhould have been the firſt in my application; her ladyſhip's death was hardly known at Bath, and indeed I did think no body could have had the *pleaſure* of conveying the ſad tidings earlier than myſelf."

"Ho, ho! I begin to underſtand you—ſpeak out man—Is Lady Bridget dead?—really and truly, abſolutely and *bona fide* dead?"

"Alas! Sir," cried the undertaker, lengthening his viſage, "it is a *melancholy* truth; and I was in hopes to have received the honour of your commands reſpecting her ladyſhip's interment,"

"You

"You *ſhall* have them—you *ſhall* have them," cried he in a tone of tranſport, "yes, you *ſhall* have them, by G—!"

"Nothing can be more reaſonable," added Lady Iſleworth, her eyes dancing with joy, "ſo pray ſet about it immediately; you have *very* much obliged us by your diligence on this occaſion,"

The undertaker's appearance anſwered to his profeſſion. He returned this condeſcending acknowledgment by a profound bow; and with a ſolemnity of countenance ſuitable to the ſubject, entered into a detail at how much coſt and trouble he ſupported a correſpondence in families of conſequence, by which means he had often the pleaſure of being the firſt to convey news of an unexpected demiſe to the ſurviving relatives of the defunct; and ended with ſuppoſing, that her ladyſhip's remains were to be interred in the family vault.

"What! carry her as far as Weſtmoreland?" interrupted the Baronet, "by no means, by no means, Mr. Sable! the journey would be quite inconvenient; ſhe never liked the country, or any of our family reſidences—no, no, *that* will never do."

"Where

"Where then, Sir, would you be pleaſed to direct that her ladyſhip ſhould repoſe?"

"Why, I think the Abbey at Bath may do very well."

"Granted!" replied the *Man of Death* "No doubt, Sir Frederick, your intentions are, that things ſhall be done *handſomely*?"

"Harkee, friend—as far as ye can make fifty pounds go in *pageantry* I will frank you—for any thing beyond that ſum I will not be anſwerable."

"I preſume, Sir, that her ladyſhip is to be buried in lead, and fifty pounds would but barely enable me to put her into a deal ſhell."

"Well, well, that is your buſineſs and not mine; put her into a leaden coffin or a quart bottle, I ſhall aſk no queſtions about the matter, but the devil take me if I allow you more than fifty pounds for the job."

A loud knock at the door annouced the dawn of a riotous night; the poor trader in death, creſt-fallen, and dejected at the hard bargain Sir Frederick had driven, was haſtily diſmiſſed, and the merry mourners could not find time to congratulate

gratulate each other, before they were ſurrounded by a little army of friends; all of whom were well diſpoſed to take a ſhare in their good fortune.

CHAP. VI.

WHO SHE WAS.

LADY Bridget Iſleworth was the fat indolent Dowager of Sir Frederick's uncle, to whoſe title and eſtates his father firſt and then himſelf had ſucceeded, in all about thirty years; a very long time, it muſt be acknowledged, for the payment of a heavy jointure! Where is the calculator who would give a wife thirty years to run after the leaſe of her huſband's life had expired? or where the heir who would, without grumbling, have anſwered the unconſcionable claim of *ſuch* an everlaſting old woman?

Sir Frederick, forced by a long, tedious, ſeries of experience, to confeſs that grumbling was neither pleaſant or profitable, hit on a better expedient, and ſo totally baniſhed from his memory the *lady* and her demands on *his* eſtate, that he never

never recollected either the one or the other, except when roused by the irresistible calls, not of his own conscience, but of her ladyship's lawyers: yet even these latter mementos, though extremely troublesome, were often set at defiance, in so much that an overplus of two thousand pounds remained in his hands, which all the diligence of law could not get out of them; one method only could have brought him to account, but Lady Bridget would have nothing to do with sheriffs' officers.

This *reasonable* dowager saw the impropriety of her living beyond the limits prescribed by custom. She had also some money of her own, with very few occasions of using it, having survived the desire of all sorts of pleasure, except that of *small* play, which was neither expensive or inconvenient. For these reasons, though her application to Sir Frederick was regularly made half-yearly, she as regularly accepted, in lieu of her annuity, his civil excuses; and if she had one quarter paid when five quarters were due, it was even *more* than she expected.

That part of the Isleworth estate appropriated to the uses of Lady Bridget's settlement, was the only unentailed part of the whole; besides which advantage, it was so firmly secured to its original

nal purpoſes, that though the preſent poſſeſſor had moved heaven and earth, Jew and Chriſtian, to burthen it, as all the reſt of his acres had been burthened, yet the thing was impoſſible.

With what tranſports then muſt he have heard of the releaſe of his dear aunt, by which event his ſtill dearer eſtates were alſo *releaſed*.—If ſhe was gone no body could tell where, they might ſoon have followed, nobody knows how.

By an unuſual clauſe in the marriage articles, it was whimſically *provided*, that the funeral expences ſhould ariſe out of the jointured eſtate; but as no particular ſum was ſpecified for this occaſional compliment, it produced the ſingular effect of engendering the *very* firſt idea of economy that had ever croſſed the brain of Sir Frederick, which, however highly the prudent world may applaud it, was greatly reprobated by the noble minded undertaker, in whoſe opinion a *handſome* funeral compenſated for all ſorts of *living* evils; and to ſuch a flame was his reſentment worked up, by reflecting on the *pitiful* fifty pound *job*, that when, on his arrival at Bath, his wife, with tears in her eyes, ran to tell him a *great* misfortune had happened, that he had been *too* haſty, for that Lady Bridget Iſleworth had only fallen down in a fit, and was come to life again, inſtead

inſtead of being diſcomforted, he ſnapped his fingers with the full force of exultation, and cried out, to the utter aſtoniſhment of his ſorrowing help-mate, "I am glad of it!—with all my heart!" He then ſnatched up a pen, and addreſſed the following laconic epiſtle to Sir Frederick:

"SIR,

"Pleaſe underſtand that I cannot have the "pleaſure of putting your worthy relation Lady "Bridget Iſleworth to repoſe; fifty pounds "would have done the thing with no ſort of "*neatneſs*; but hoping to have future favours "of *like* kind from *ſelf* and *family*, I would not "have been off my bargain, if her ladyſhip had "not very unexpectedly come to life again!— "Hope expences incurred will be conſidered on "*next* occaſion.—And am, Sir, your moſt dutiful ſervant to command,

"JOHN GINGERLY."

"*Sir Frederick Iſleworth.*"

Could Sir Frederick or my lady have ſurmiſed the misfortune that hung over their heads—had they known, that whilſt they gayly ſported in the ſanguine rays of expectation, the very foundation of theſe expectations would have fallen to the ground—what a ſombre complexion might ſuch

ſuch knowledge have caſt over the exhilirating amuſements of *that* evening, which they conſidered as the forerunner of wealth, or at leaſt a partial redemption from preſent difficulties; but being in this inſtance the favourites of fortune, the mortifying intelligence that Lady Bridget was not yet ready to receive the funeral honours ſo prudently provided, did not reach town till after Sir Frederiek had got a purchaſer for that part of his eſtate on which ſhe was jointured, together with the ſum of one thouſand pounds in advance, before the deeds could be compleated, which were to convey the whole of this only unincumbered part of his property from himſelf and family for ever.

CHAP. VII.

PRELIMINARIES DISCUSSED.

THE gentleman who made this ſud len purchaſe was no other than Mr. Curry: he had refuſed to give up the rights of a guardian, *because* ſolemnly engaged never to relinquiſh them;—it was a promiſe drawn from him in the laſt moments

ments of an expiring friend: Mr. Ludlow exacted the vow, and religion taught him to reſpect it.

This obligation, when ſoberly explained to Sir Frederick, bore ſo ſtrongly the figure of civil neceſſity, that he was not half ſo much diſpleaſed as he had before been, with the rude denial of Bateman; he even condeſcended to conſult Curry on the emergency of his affairs, and complained to him of his family expences, which the honeſt well-meaning merchant had very wiſely adviſed him to *retrench*.

But, that wiſdom is not *always* vindicated of her children, there was a ſtrong proof in the ſtubborn diſreliſh with which this wholeſome counſel was received by the Baronet, who coldly replied,

"There was no neceſſity that he ſhould curtail Lady Iſleworth of her *domeſtic* or *ſocial* enjoyments for the ſake of a little *preſent* embarraſſment, which would, in the courſe of nature, *ſoon* be done away; his old aunt could not live for *ever*, and at her death he ſhould ſell an eſtate, the profits ariſing from the ſale of which would liquidate *all* his debts."

He might have ſaid, *except* thoſe contracted on annuities, which ſwallowed up four-fifths of his

his income. But with theſe irredeemable incumbrances he never choſe to burthen his *own* thoughts, or intrude a liſt of them on the memory of his friends, having contracted none of theſe *private* bleſſings but on terms of *ſilence*, which it was not for the intereſt of his *money-lending* connections to break through, as long as their demands were punctually anſwered, which hitherto had been effected at the expence of honeſt tradeſmen, who admitted him into their books, with more faith than diſcretion.

The converſation I have been alluding to happened on that memorable evening, when Sir Frederick waited on Mr. Curry, to *coax* or *curſe* him out of his guardianſhip; but finding neither likely to ſucceed, and fancying he ſaw ſomething in his benevolent countenance that ſeemed to ſay, *I would ſerve you if I could*, it is better, thought he, to make a friend than an enemy of this man, who, on ſome other occaſion, may at leaſt repleniſh my play-purſe with a brace of hundreds. In conformity to this convenient opinion, he dropped the *hauteur* of a drawcanſir, and aſſumed the language of a ſuppliant, praying for counſel at the ſhrine of experience.

Mr.

Mr. Curry aſked him, "What he conceived to be the value of his Weſtmoreland eſtate, ſubject to the jointure of Lady Bridget?"

"It had been eſtimated," he replied, "at thirty thouſand pounds, and hoped it would at *leaſt* produce him *that* ſum."

Before they parted, Curry deſired Sir Frederick he might be conſulted on the purchaſe, whenever it was to be diſpoſed: "he wanted," he ſaid, "a landed property in *that* county, of courſe would give him more for an eſtate in ſuch good condition than any other perſon leſs attached to the beauties of ſituation than himſelf."

This requeſt gave our man of faſhion a ſort of negative pleaſure, without acting as an immediate ſoporific on the ſhattered conſtitution of his deceaſed ſpirits. The proſpect of touching ſo conſiderable a ſum was pleaſant enough; but who could meaſure the diſtance between his neceſſity and his affluence? he had never indeed heard that any mortal, ſince the Antedeluvian age, could get to the ſummit of two hundred years, and then tug away for the third; but if ſuch a ſturdy mortal was *ever* to exiſt again, he felt

felt himſelf fully perſuaded it would be his aunt Bridget.

We have ſeen, after the conference had broken up, with how heavy a heart Sir Frederick returned to his ſplendid home: we may alſo have perceived no *bad* ſpecimen of fortune's whimſicality, in the arrival of the undertaker, Mr. John Gingerly, with *glad* tidings from Bath, and the ſorrowful ones which awaited his return thither; and now we have only, if you pleaſe to beſtow our comments on our hero's good luck, which carried him to cloſe the bargain for his Weſtmoreland eſtate with Mr. Corry, at an early hour the next morning, before the letters were delivered.

Having agreed to ſell and buy at the rate of twenty-five years purchaſe, one thouſand pounds earneſt money were depoſited in the hands of the thrice happy ſquanderer, who immediately flew to the houſe of his friend Captain Jerry Snug, and toſſed into the lap of his expecting lady a moiety of the new acquired treaſure, for which his word was before engaged; nor did he take any perſonal ſecurity for this ſum, or other loans made in the ſame way, but ſuch as Captain Snug rendered valid by a full and hearty concurrence.

Theſe

Theſe two viſits, the one of buſineſs, the other of pleaſure, being finiſhed much to the ſatisfaction of Sir Frederick, he haſtily drew out his watch—found it was paſt his hour of dreſſing—exacted a promiſe from Mrs. Snug that ſhe would ſhew herſelf at his wife's next aſſembly—took a haſty, but tender adieu—knocked at the library door, as he paſſed down ſtairs, to let the complaiſant huſband know he was retiring—and haſtened home to make Lady Iſleworth a ſharer in his good humour.

CHAP. VIII.

THE FORTITUDE OF A FINE LADY.

SIR FREDERICK had this morning gone out on foot, which was often his cuſtom, when he bent his ſteps towards the *magnet* of his inclinations—for this good reaſon, that *ſervants* have eyes and ears, and *wives* have curioſity.

Juſt as he reached his houſe, buſied in a profound reverie on the *uſe* of money, and the faſcination of beauty, my lady's footman ruſhed out at the door—his face bore in it all the buſtle of diſpatch

diſpatch—he had no hat on his head—and in the violence of his haſte he ran againſt his maſter, whoſe eyes were turned on the pavement, and would have laid him low, if the Baronet, rouſed by ſo rude a ſhock, had not ſet himſelf in a poſture of defence; but, perceiving the danger proceeded from one of his own domeſtics, with a curſe and a blow, he demanded the occaſion of his hurry; when he learned, that the mate of his boſom was dying, that the terrified ſervant was running to fetch the doctor!

Sir Frederick neither retarded or forwarded the haſte of the meſſenger, but walked on to his apartment, with his thoughts rather fixed on a lively *miſtreſs* than an expiring *wife*.

Soberly he ſat himſelf down on a chair—ſoberly pulled his bell—and, on the appearance of his valet, *as* ſoberly enquired if his ſon Arthur was come back from Newmarket?

"No," was the reply: but before he could aſk after the health of Lady Iſleworth, if he had any ſuch intentions, his eldeſt daughter Clariſſa burſt into the room, and, half ſuffocated with her tears, cried out, "Oh! papa, what can be the matter with mama?—ſhe is dying!—ſhe is dying!—pray come to her this moment."

ment." She ſnatched his hand, and dragged him reluctantly enough to the ſick chamber.

Stretched on a ſopha lay Lady Iſleworth, in ſtrong hyſterics, alternately ſcreaming, laughing, and writhing her delicate form into a thouſand groteſque figures, as if ſhe had been under the immediate influence of witchcraft.

Clariſſa threw herſelf by the ſide of her mother, and endeavoured to keep her head ſteady, whilſt Sir Frederick, advancing with as much *decent* melancholy as his happy ſtate of mind could lend to accommodate his countenance, took up one of her ladyſhip's hands, when, behold, his curioſity was awakened by ſomething which, ſhe graſped ſo faſt, that to unlooſe her hold coſt him infinite pains and many ſtruggles; but at ength the taſk was accompliſhed, when he became poſſeſſed of a paper, as the reward of his exertions, the contents of which, as his eager eyes ran them over, had nearly reduced him to the ſame ſituation as the dying lady, being no other than Mr. John Gingerly's letter to announce the reſurrection of Lady Bridget Iſleworth!

It was many hours before this deplorable couple recovered their *uſual* ſpirits, or even their very

very ſmall portion of common ſenſe. Yet the wife's fit of ſpleen was ſhaken off ſooner than the huſband's chagrin; and being fit company only for themſelves, every body elſe was diſmiſſed from the apartment, whilſt, by a ſort of tacit conſent, they continued together, deviſing on ways and means to extricate themſelves from the diffic ulties that involved them.

Lady Iſleworth lifted her head from the arm of the ſopha on which it was before reclined, and ſitting up in an erect poſture, ſighed from the very bottom of her diſconſolate heart—Sir Frederick walked up and down the room, meditating with a vacant countenance, on their mutual diſappointment—her ladyſhip was the firſt to break this awful ſilence.

"What is to be done?"—ſhe aſked,—"What ſhall we do?"

Sir Frederick ſtopped ſhort—ſtared her full in the face—but anſwered not; when ſhe again repeated her queſtion, with this addition, "My dear, Sir Frederick, what ſhall we do?"

Common politeneſs now obliged him to anſwer her exclamation, and he replied—"Go to the devil! I don't know any *ſhorter* way out of our

our perplexities. I have engaged to ſell the Weſtmoreland eſtate this morning, and have received a thouſand pounds earneſt."

"Charming!" cried out his tranſported wife "but why did you not tell me this good news ſooner? A thouſand pounds is better than nothing—it will enable us to fulfill all our *preſent* engagements! Pray give me five hundred of it this moment—you know we have promiſed Clariſſa a ball—her eſtabliſhment depends, I am convinced it does, on her appearance that night! —Lord Clarence has given broad hints already, I am ſure he will make propoſals the very next morning.

"Not ſo faſt," dryly interrupted the Baronet, "I have no *five* hundred pounds, curſe the old woman! to beſtow on *chances* or *puppet ſhows*."

"Why, what then have you done, with the money? Did you not tell me this moment you had received a thouſand pounds earneſt for your Weſtmoreland eſtate?"

"Suppoſe I have, what is your wiſe concluſion even if I was *really* in poſſeſſion of the *whole* ſum?"

"Confound

"Confound your propoſition!—half is already paid to tradeſmen, as a prop to their patience, and *now* I muſt raiſe that again to pay back the depoſit—Of all the miſchief that could befall me, Lady Bridget's riſing *before* the day of judgment is the greateſt!"

"But, Sir Frederick, why was you ſo premature, to pay your *dirty* trades-people before our *own* neceſſities were ſupplied?"

He whiſtled, to lull his conſcience, rather than brave its checks, by confirming the untruth he had advanced.

"Surely it was mightily ill-judged," purſued ſhe; "but, as five hundred is ſaved out of the wreck, let me have two hundred and fifty, which, with *good* management and the new credit we *muſt* have gained by paying theſe people may enable us to be *decent*, though not magnificent.

"You are enough to provoke the patience of Job," thundered out the Baronet, "have I not told you I *muſt* pay back the whole ſum to Curry—it was *he* that bargained for my eſtate—and I know but one way to raiſe it—*you* have jewels, madam, and *I* have debts, are you willing to

to part with the one that the other may be redeemed?"

"Willing!" cried her ladyſhip, heſitating, and pauſing as ſhe ſpoke, "Willing!—Yes, to be ſure; I am perfectly willing to oblige you in any thing—that is to ſay, in any thing within my reach—but what you propoſe is impoſſible; for indeed, my dear, you have been ſo negligent in the payment of my pin-money, that my *jewels* are long ago *all* converted into *paſte!*—Nay, don't fret about it (for now his rage was no longer to be reſtrained, and he ſtamped with the fury of a madman).—I think myſelf as well dreſſed in the *ſhadow* as in the *ſubſtance*," continued ſhe; and was proceeding with her uſual volubility, when the door ſuddenly flew open, and in bounced their ſon Arthur, leading a handſome, lively, bold-looking young woman, whom Lady Iſleworth received into her expanded arms, with an exclamation of joyful ſurpriſe, by the ſtile and title of her "Dear, dear Lady Ann Orford!"

"My dear Lady Ann!" was alſo repeated by Sir Frederick with equal cordiality, whilſt her ladyſhip only replied to theſe ſpontaneous marks of fondneſs by a loud laugh, in which ſhe was joined by Arthur, who, as ſoon as he could articulate, wonderfully aſtoniſhed them, by pre-

preſenting

ſenting their unexpected viſitor, *not* as Lady Ann Orford, but as Lady Ann Iſleworth.

"Indeed!" ſaid ſhe, ſeeing her new *papa* and *mama* with a flag of incredulity hoiſted on their countenances, "indeed what the *wretch* tells you is *too* true! Do you know, that inſtead of running at Newmarket, he came to the *Wilderneſs* to run away with me, whether I would or no.—We have actually been before the blackſmith, who put on our fetters ſo tight, that, heaven help us! I fear we ſhall find it hard to get rid of them."

This decided declaration on the lady's part diſtanced every doubt; Sir Frederick and Lady Iſleworth renewed their careſſes—their endearments were in proportion to the acres of this *reputed* heireſs. And now the old aunt—the Weſtmoreland eſtate—the thouſand pounds—the falſe jewels—with all their other various croſſes, vaniſhed before the ſplendid alliance of their ſon Arthur, whoſe real ſituation we ſhall diſcloſe in the next chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

INTREPID LOVE.

ARTHUR ISLEWORTH was a chip of the old block; he knew every body *but* himſelf, and loved every thing that did *not* promote his intereſt; he inherited all the *ſenſe* of his father, with all the *propenſities* of his mother, yet had never been remarked for his *talents* or his *frugality*—but for a handſome pair of eyes and regular features he had pretenſions not to be diſputed; theſe procured him a ready paſſport into the hearts of almoſt every female who looked on the *dangerous creature*; a preſumptuous experiment! which, if the Scandalous Chronicle *can* be credited, has coſt a dozen of them, at leaſt, the trifling price of their whole *little* ſtock of chaſtity.

Lady Ann Orford, the only child of Lord Benvour, did not gaze on the charms of Arthur with *impunity*: ſhe had ſeen him three times, and danced with him once. The flame which was lighted in theſe tranſient interviews nothing but matrimony could quench.

At firſt he appeared inſenſible to the advantage of his conqueſt, and would probably have con-

continued ſo to the end of time, his attention being divided by a multiplicity of beauties contending for his notice, but for the lady's *own* ingenuity, who ſoon got acquainted with his mother. Now, whatever faults may be laid to the preſent times, that of maiden ſhyneſs is not to be numbered amongſt them: ſo the love-ſick dame of quality let her new friend into the affairs of her heart, and Lady Iſleworth ſaw the connection in a mighty favourable point of view.

With ſome difficulty, at laſt ſhe beat it into the head of her darling ſon, that he could not do better than offer himſelf to Lady Ann's acceptance. The ſacrifice was accordingly made, with more archneſs than ardour; and accepted, with more readineſs than delicacy.

Sir Frederick waited on Lord Benvour with propoſals: but Lord Benvour had other views for *his* daughter, and gave the Baronet's application a *decided* negative. Hard words paſſed between them; they parted in all the bitterneſs of wrath.

The next day Lady Ann was forcibly taken to the country, and her ſapient lover thought no more of the matter. Not ſo her intriguing ladyſhip: a tender billet reached his hands in a few

days after her ſecluſion, inviting his attendance in the neighbourhood of her father's houſe, from whence ſhe would find a way, ſhe aſſured him, to make her elopement, in defiance of locks, bolts, and duennas.

He obeyed the ſummons, having nothing elſe to do on the day ſhe propoſed meeting him. Accordingly he ſet out for the *Wilderneſs*; but did not let his family into the ſecret, merely that they might not laugh at him, if his ſcheme of carrying off the lady ſhould prove unſucceſsful; he therefore made them believe he was going to viſit his *ſtud*, which he had ſent to Newmarket, to be ready fot the next week's ſport.

Having once embarked, he made ſuch diſpatch, that at the end of eight days we ſee him returned to the arms of his *tranſported* parents, with an additional rib to thoſe with which nature had provided him. So now let us leave them, exulting in their new acquired felicity, and take ſome other branches of this *wonder working* but *not ſingular* family.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

CLARISSA ISLEWORTH.

CLARISSA's appearance in this uncertain world, which ſome think a very charming one, whilſt others call it a vale of miſery and ſhadows, was announced eleven months after the firſt exhibition of her brother Arthur. Mr. Curry had taken upon him to anſwer for her at the holy font, that ſhe ſhould be taught the Lord's prayer and ten commandments, like other Chriſtian children; but finding, at the age of ſix years, that ſhe could not repeat a word of either, he was a man of too much honour to renounce the duties for which he had made himſelf reſponſible; and at the joint requeſt of his amiable wife, the young lady was readily conſigned to their charge, *becauſe* ſhe ſhould be out of the way, *and* becauſe the good people to whom ſhe was intruſted had no children of their own; ſo that even the *wiſdom* of Sir Frederick and Lady Iſleworth was ſufficient to inſtruct them that no body carries their riches with them to another world, and that ſome body muſt inherit them in this.

Placed under the auſpices of her new protectors, Miſs Iſleworth made rapid progreſs, not only in Chriſtian but all other knowledge; and at thirteen we may venture to pronounce her a very amiable, a very beautiful, and a very accompliſhed girl. When ſhe had attained this critical period, Mrs. Curry was called upon to render up the volume of her life, on the pages of which were written the actions of forty years, in characters ſo pure from ſtains, ſo glowing with charity in all its figurative lovelineſs, as can leave no doubts on the mind of the reader, but that her accounts were paſſed with applauſe at the bar of heaven.

It would be ſuperfluous to ſay, that the filial endearments of a child ſo engaging as Clariſſa had very much intereſted the heart and affections of Mr. Curry; he had aſſiſted to cultivate the flowers of her mind, and to eradicate, as much as lay within the compaſs of his ſkill, the pernicious weeds of conſtitutional foibles. But nature is a cunning gardener; her ſeeds of original ſin ſhe ſows deep, and their roots are ſtubborn Amongſt all the good qualities of his young charge, this plain worthy man could not fail to perceive a little daſh of coquetry, and a great paſſion for ſhew. At theſe evils he had been tugging

tugging ſeven years, tearing them up by the branches, but leaving the root in vigour.

On the death of Mrs. Curry, Sir Frederick and Lady Iſleworth came to reclaim their daughter: the generous guardian wept with agony to part with his darling, but could find no pretence for detaining her, having no longer a female inſpectreſs to direct her conduct. So great was his ſorrow, that when he ſaw the carriage which conveyed her from him turn from the door, and felt his cheeks yet wet with her tears, he cried out, claſping his hands together, "*All* that I loved in life is taken from me, and I have nothing more to loſe!"

After the firſt burſt of grief had ſubſided, which the grateful heart of Clariſſa naturally experienced, on being finally ſeparated from thoſe indulgent friends who, for ſo many years, ſeemed only to exiſt in her pleaſures, happineſs, and improvement, ſhe began to conſider her parents in a more favourable light than ſhe at firſt beheld them; ſhe thought her father very good humoured, and her mother one of the fineſt dreſſed ladies ſhe had ever ſeen.

Whilſt under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Curry ſhe ſaw them but ſeldom, and then only in

in *diſhabile*, at one or other of their houſes; but on the day when they came to fetch her away to reſide with them, they appeared with all the advantages that riches could diſplay.

They were bound that evening firſt for the opera, and afterwards to ſup at Lady Hartford's, and from thence to the maſquerade in a ſelect party of gipſeys, whoſe habits awaited them at the houſe of her ladyſhip.

Lady Iſleworth gave notice to Mr. Curry of her intentions to call for his beloved charge at ten, and to treat her with a peep at the opera, that ſhe might not be moped to death with melancholy on her change of habitation.

"You are a lovely creature, my dear," ſaid this *ſenſible* mother, as ſhe ſat gazing on Clariſſa's cherub face, who was placed oppoſite to her in the carriage, "you are indeed a very charming girl! Don't you think ſo, Sir Frederick?"

"She will do very well," replied the Baronet, with more admiration in the expreſſion of his countenance than there appeared to be approbation in his words, "and if ſhe holds up her head, and forgets every thing but her obedience

dience to *us*, we ſhall have no reaſon to be aſhamed of her."

Clariſſa's little heart bounded with joy at theſe, and many other proofs of her parents' folly, conſidered by her as tokens only of their fondneſs; and when ſhe lightly followed the footſteps of her mother into the opera-houſe, which happened to be exceedingly crowded, every eye was fixed on the intereſting figure before them.

A handſome youth, who had taken his poſt in the pit *vis-à-vis* to Lady Iſleworth's box, cried out to an elderly gentleman who ſat next him, "What a phenomenon! Modeſty has united with vivacity, and ſenſibility joined itſelf to infantine grace, in forming that adorable creature."

Many more ſuch ſpeeches, from different quarters, reached the ears of the delighted beauty, and increaſed the animation of thoſe delicate bluſhes which were before ſufficiently becoming.

The exultation of Sir Frederick and Lady Iſleworth at the univerſal gaze their daughter attracted, produced, before one act of the piece was over, with their uſual ſagacity, this determination,

mination, that, young as ſhe was, the beautiful creature ſhould be preſented the following winter; becauſe, they obſerved, ſhe never could alter for the *better*, but muſt change for the worſe.—Beſides, they foreſaw about that time there would be a plentiful harveſt of young heirs who *muſt* be provided for, and theſe girls who are not early in the field can have no chance of reaping to their advantage.

This was Lady Iſleworth's obſervation. But, why do I ſay ſo? I ſhould never forgive the reader who could ſuppoſe it to be my *own*.

Clariſſa, though but thirteen, anticipated in her growth the appearance of ſixteen: her face and form, had they been moulded in wax, would have crowned the artiſt with immortal glory, as well for exactitude of proportion as beauty of colouring.

Her dreſs, this evening of her firſt and early exhibition on the ſtage of the world, was a frock of clear muſlin, ſetting off her figure to the beſt advantage; a black ſaſh, worn in commemoration of the affecting accident by which ſhe was ſeparated from the friends of her infancy, incircled her ſlender waiſt; her ſnowy boſom, ſhaded only by a lawn tucker, often heaved the

ſigh

ſigh of recollection to that melancholy event; nor could the magic of adulation repreſs the ſame ſentiment from ſometimes clouding her illumined countenance with momentary ſadneſs, which, inſtead of defacing a ſingle charm, gave to its expreſſion all the graces of variety: ſhe wore no ornament on her head, except what nature had beſtowed, whoſe bounty might be called prodigality—ſo unſparingly did ſhe laviſh the fineſt auburn treſſes in the world that they fell below the waiſt in wild profuſion, and in part concealed a forehead unequalled in ſymmetry, unrivalled in whiteneſs; all the milder virtues revelled in her ſoft blue eyes; and envy herſelf, had ſhe ever been known to ſpeak truth, might have acknowledged, that every particular feature had its commiſſion for the deſtruction of mankind.

At the end of the ſecond act, in the middle of a pathetic ſong, once the favourite of Mrs. Curry, Clariſſa, overpowered by the tender feelings of retroſpection, and too young to know any thing of that faſhionable fortitude which is a declared enemy to all ſorts of grief, but what may owe its ſource to the deſertion of a lover or the death of a lap-dog, felt inclined to ſhed tears, and ſhed them ſo freely, that her mortified parents hurried her out of the houſe, covered with confuſion at her childiſh behaviour." "She

ought to have known better," remarked Lady Iſleworth; "it is entirely owing to theſe *dowdy* people, who have brought her up, and beat ſentiment into her head unmixed with politeneſs."

At the door of her father's houſe the poor diſgraced girl was bid to go to the nurſery, from which ſhe would no more be taken till ſhe knew how to conduct herſelf in the circle of faſhion.

Madame Finette, a French governeſs, being ſummoned, Clariſſa was committed to her care, who conducted her to an apartment known by the appellation of the lecture room, becauſe it was here that every child in the family rode their own hobby-horſe, taking their lectures, as they did their ſweetmeats, juſt as inclination directed, by which means they were not very likely to be cloyed with either.

In their way to that ſcholaſtic repoſitory, Madame Finette was aſked by Clariſſa how long her brothers and ſiſters had been in bed? for, be it here mentioned, there had tumbled into this ill-conducted houſe no leſs than ſix younger children, who were all deſtined to ſcramble for education and fortunes as well as they could.

"I ſhould

"I ſhould ſuppoſe," ſaid Miſs Iſleworth, "at ſo late an hour I can have no chance of ſeeing them to-night?"

"You will ſee them this moment," replied the governeſs, "for your ſiſter Matilda has a cold and fever, and your mama indulges all the reſt to ſit by her bed-ſide till twelve, and amuſe the poor child with a game at cards."

Clariſſa lifted up her eyes, but ſaid nothing, though perhaps ſhe was drawing a ſilent compariſon between her *real* and *adopted* mothers' management of young people.

They paſſed from the ſchool-room into the ſick chamber, where the little invalid, with a handkerchief bound round her forehead, lay ſtretched on the bed, with all her cloaths on, becauſe ſhe did not chuſe they ſhould be taken off till her companions were put to reſt alſo. Clariſſa, having fondly received and returned their careſſes, very ſoon prevailed on the diminutive party to retire: ſhe continued half an hour at the ſide of Matilda's pillow, then left it for her own, firſt ſubmitting to the cuſtom in which ſhe had been trained, of thankfulneſs to her Creator for paſt, and imploring his future protection.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

ROSES HAVE THEIR THORNS AND VIRTUES HAVE THEIR SHADOWS.

WHAT were Clariſſa's foibles?

Too large a ſhare of *conſtitutional* vivacity—*too* little inclination to take the *trouble* of thinking—a *too* great deſire to create admiration—and a diſpoſition *too* much addicted to what is commonly ſtiled romantic, but to which, with permiſſion, I would give a ſofter epithet; I would call it the effuſion of tenderneſs, at leaſt when ſpringing from a mind ſo well-diſpoſed as Miſs Iſleworth's. We know of no other foibles; and theſe certainly are dangerous enough to a young woman, dragged into the world before ſhe can poſſibly have formed any idea of the beings which compoſe it: and if theſe errors of nature ripened to greater perfection in the hot-bed of diſſipation than they would have arrived at under the careful eye of her late guardians, we may be *grieved* but muſt not be *ſurprised* at their progreſs.

Sir

Sir Frederick and Lady Iſleworth, for ſeveral weeks ſaw no more of their eldeſt daughter, after having ſecured her under the paternal roof; becauſe, on the ſelf ſame evening, formed a party of pleaſure for the Iſle of Wight, and ſet off the next morning without thinking on Clariſſa, or enquiring what was become of the poor little complaining Matilda, but left them both, with the reſt of their infant troop, to repoſe for ſafety on Providence and the houſehold apothecary.

There are moments of temptation to the youthful imagination, when the early leſſons of wiſdom, however deeply implanted, may be forgotten, but it is ſeldom that they can be entirely eradicated, unleſs the head and heart ſhould happen to be irreconcileable variance with reaſon and goodneſs.

Had Mr. Curry ſeen Clariſſa enter the opera-houſe—beheld with what eagerneſs ſhe caught the flying ſounds of encircling admiration—witneſſed the tranſports that fluſhed her cheeks and ſparkled her eyes, he would have cried out, "*The foundation I have laid on is ſhaken, and the whole edifice muſt fall to the ground!*"

Yet the following day, had he contemplated her in the act of conveying thoſe inſtructions to others

others which ſhe had learned from himſelf—had he ſeen her in the nurſery, ſurrounded by her liſping brothers and ſiſters, hearing them read their catechiſms, and teaching them to ſay their prayers, which being a new exerciſe, ſeemed to delight them as much as any other novelty; had he heard her preaching to them the pleaſures of application and the diſgrace of idleneſs,—then would he have rejoiced in his amiable pupil—then would he have exclaimed, "*This good girl never can be ſeduced by the prevalence of example.*"

Enough at preſent of Clariſſa, and the little brood of untaught urchins who claimed her cares and divided her affections; we now turn back to a breakfaſt ſcene, ſucceeding that day when Arthur, by bringing an unportioned wife into the family, ſeemed to have completed its deſtruction.

There were aſſembled round the table of this elegant repaſt, oſtentatiouſly decorated by plate unclean and china ill paired, Sir Frederick Iſleworth, with a *doubting* countenance, in which ſatisfaction would have ſhone predominant, had there been no difference whether a man married a wife *with* or *without* the conſent of her father;—Lady Iſleworth, happy, becauſe her happineſs was unalloyed by reflection—ſupremely happy that

that ſhe could addreſs a daughter-in-law by the high-ſounding titles of Lady Ann, and your Ladyſhip;—the bridegroom, paying little attention to any body, or any thing, except himſelf, his tea, his bread, and his butter;—the bride, highly rouged, trying *not* to look confident; whilſt Clariſſa, like modeſty perſonified, but pale and dejected, cloſed the family circle.

"Arthur," ſaid Sir Frederick, in a tone half pleaſed half ſerious, "the honour this lady has done us, by uniting herſelf to our houſe, muſt make us active to deſerve it."

"Damn the tea!" cried Arthur, who had burnt his mouth at the beginning of his father's flowery conception: "*Clariſſa*, why did you give it me ſo confounded hot?"

"It is your own fault," ſaid Lady Ann; "are you not of age to know *what* will do you good or *what* will do you harm?"

"That is as it may happen." retorted he, ſulkily; and, pouring out the tea into his ſaucer, he remained ſilent.

"Poh! what a ſpoiled child you are!" ſaid his

his mother, fondly tapping his cheek, "I hope Lady Ann will not indulge you as I have done."

"Indeed, Madam, I ſhall never endanger his humour by any ſuch trials," ſhe replied, "for it *has*, and ever will *be* my opinion, that men were formed to be *our* ſlaves, and not our *maſters*.—Am I right, Arthur?"

"No, by G—;" replied he, "but, right or wrong, the thing is *done*, and we muſt make the beſt of it."

The thread of Sir Frederick's fine ſpun compliment had been broken, and he ſeized upon this occaſion to reunite it.

"Make the beſt of it!" he repeated, "Why ſurely, Arthur, ſuch a fate as your's can ſtand in no need of philoſophy, unleſs it be to teach you *moderation*, in ſupporting your felicity in being huſband to the *beautiful* daughter and *ſole* heireſs of Lord Benvour."

They both burſt into a loud laugh. "Oh, Lord!" cried Lady Ann, "my *beauty* may ſtand the teſt; but, as to my *money*, I poſitively never expect a ſingle ſhilling from my father! he is one of the moſt unreaſonable *old*

Quizes

Quizes you ever met with: here I *am*, and you muſt do with me as you can."

"Well, my dear," replied Lady Iſleworth, delighting in the wit of her new relation, "we ſhall with pleaſure provide you an eſtabliſhment not unworthy your birth and accompliſhment."

Sir Frederick ſtared—Arthur whiſtled—Lady Ann ſmiled—and Clariſſa bluſhed, from a conſciouſneſs, no doubt, of her mother's total inability to perform, even in little, what ſhe had promiſed ſo largely.

"Pray, Arthur, have you and Lady Ann," aſked Sir Frederick, "written to my Lord on the ſubject of your marriage; it has now taken place ſix days, and I ſhould hope you have not neglected ſo neceſſary a duty."

"O *yes*," replied her ladyſhip, "we have written, I aſſure you."

"Well, and what does he ſay?" aſked the Baronet, eagerly.

"Oh!" cried her unembarraſſed ladyſhip, "*that* queſtion has put me in mind of the moſt comical ſtory you ever heard in your life; *beſides*,

ſides, it is ſo applicable, you muſt allow me to repeat it: An old nurſe, dandling on her knee a poor little ſqualling brat juſt popped into the world, aſked it a thouſand nonſenſical queſtions, among the reſt, what they had given it to eat? The babe of courſe ſaid nothing. So ſome wit ſent it about for a miracle, that when nurſe aſked the queſtion, the child anſwered *Nothing at all.* Now, you cannot think how many fools I have made on the foundation of this jeſt; but I only tell it you as being exactly my father's anſwer to the mournful ditty of repentance, duty, and all *that*, which Arthur and I ſent him, as *ſoon* as the blackſmith parſon had converted two ideots into one fool!"

The ſtory having ended with a violent fit of laughter, Lady Iſleworth again declared her approbation of Lady Ann's talents for humour; and indeed it was the *only* quarter through which it was *poſſible* ſhe could receive applauſe: Sir Frederick was ſtruck dumb: Mr. Iſleworth continued looking at ſome memorandums he had noted down on a Newmarket calendar, of courſe did not attend either to the tale or to the relater. As to Clariſſa, her eyes were fixed on her father, with that pity-moving expreſſion as if ſhe would have ſaid, "*Alas! Sir, I am ſure you are unhappy.*"

Lady

Lady Iſleworth, ſeeing every face but her own and Lady Ann's dreſſed in the unbecoming mode of conſideration, began to complain of the diſagreeable effects which the diſappointment of Lady Bridget's revival to life had left on her ſpirits; and begged, if her huſband did not deſire to ſee her again reduced to the ſame extremity from which ſhe had ſo lately recovered, *all ſerious* ſubjects might at preſent be diſmiſſed; "beſides, I muſt go," ſaid ſhe, "to MAYO, my upholſterer, and order furniture for Lady Ann Iſleworth's apartment: *indeed* I am petrified with ſhame that ſhe ſhould have paſſed the night in a place ſo ill-fitted for *her* reception."

CHAP. XII.

PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

BESIDES the *certain* advantages which this houſe of faſhion enjoyed, by engrafting a noble branch on the ſtock of their own gentility, there were other honours, other emoluments, not *quite* ſo certain, but which afforded, in contemplation, a great deal of matter for hope to build on.

The

The imagination of projectors, *ſuch* projectors as Sir Frederick and Lady Iſleworth, may be compared to a ſhallow ſtream, on whoſe boſom is continually floating a ſucceſſion of green leaves, golden-coloured ſtraws, and ſilver coloured feathers, which cheat the eyes of a fool, but engages not the attention of a wiſe man.

Years had this contriving pair been planning matches for Clariſſa, which ſomething or other always happened to interrupt. As to the young lady herſelf, who, as ſhe grew in ſtature, beauty, and ſweetneſs, became the idol of all the young men about town—*to her* neither their parents or guardians *could* have framed any reaſonable objection; but there was a fatal rock, not to be hid from the eyes of any body *leſs* blind than a man whom love has effectually hoodwinked; and ſuch objects are ſeldom let to wander alone; ſome experienced guide generally attends their footſteps, to point out the ſhoals and quickſands of poverty, the traces of which it was impoſſible ſhould be concealed, by any artifice, from peeping out in the ſhattered finances of the Iſleworth family.

Lord Clarence, two winters preceding the commencement of my hiſtory, ſaw and admired Clariſſa. Many things were in favour of this match,

match, with only *one* againſt it—he *was* an earl, he *was* rich, he *was* independent, *but* he *was* already married; and whether it happened that he did not *chuſe* to adopt the preſent mode of engaging *one* wife to fill the place of another, before *that* other has vacated, or whether he ſaw in the modeſt mein of Miſs Iſleworth that any propoſition of the ſort would be received with the ſcorn and contempt it would have merited, he refrained from declaring his paſſion; and, to avoid temptation, took his invalid *cara ſposa* into the country, from whence he no more returned until he had ſeen his counteſs decently interred; and whiled away the firſt ſolitary months of widowhood, not in ſhedding hypocritical tears over her aſhes, but in counting the weeks, the days, the hours, when with propriety he might go back to town and offer himſelf to the acceptance of Clariſſa, whoſe lovely image accompanied his imagination in all its flights.

It would be too much to ſay he came, he ſaw, he conquered; yet he did *come*, he did *see*, but the conqueſt remained doubtful.

By Sir Frederick and Lady Iſleworth his lordſhip was received as a bleſſing leaſt expected, and at a time the moſt acceptable; not that he had opened the ſiege in form; however, it muſt be

be confeſſed, he was ſet down before the citadel, with ſuch an army of ſighs, ogles, and attentions, as to much *leſs* critical obſervers would fully have explained the nature of his viſits to Portman Square.

Clariſſa herſelf was the laſt to underſtand what was his *real* meaning; but, when her mother pulled the bandage from her eyes with which indifference had bound them—when ſhe could no longer plead ignorance of Lord Clarence's partiality, without calling in queſtion the veracity of her parents, who a hundred times a day congratulated her on the certainty of an eſtabliſhment, brilliant, even beyond their hopes—when ſhe conſidered their perſeverance in any ſcheme of aggrandizement, and the warmth of his lordſhip's purſuits, ſhe trembled at her own ſituation, and her heart ſickened with ſadneſs, bordering on deſpair.

At the period when Arthur introduced Lady Ann Iſleworth to his family, poor Clariſſa was deprived of the only real friend ſhe could be ſaid *ever* to have poſſeſſed.

Mr. Curry's affection for his adopted daughter continued lively and fervent as in the days of her childhood. On her part, though *every* one of

of her thoughts, or perhaps of her actions, as ſhe ſailed down the ſtream of diſſipation, ſignet-like, on the feathers of her mother ſwan, may *not* have been ſo irreproachable as to make her unfearful of his cenſure, lay them unreſervedly before him, *yet* there were few exceptions on which ſhe did not conſult his judgment and follow his counſel, particularly when beginning to fear the approaches of Lord Clarence. Ah! with what ſpeed would ſhe have flown to huſh her throbbing apprehenſions in his fatherly tenderneſs, to have aſked his advice, and to have followed his *directions*, if an inſuperable bar had not already ariſen to ſeparate her from that one only *but* certain ſource of conſolation.

Mr. Curry's viſits for many years were frequent and well received in Portman-ſquare; but, about ſix months before death had releaſed Lord Clarence from the pains and penalties of wedlock, it ſo happened that the guardian father of Miſs Iſleworth called at the houſe, when none of the family were very viſible but Clariſſa herſelf.

He found her languid, depreſſed, debilitated—the wreck of beauty, and the martyr of diſſipation!

Looking

Looking at her with an air of tender compaſſion, he ſhook his head, and aſked the cauſe of her faded complexion, her heavy eyes, and irritated nerves; for, as ſhe preſented her hand to his touch, it ſeemed to tremble with the palſy of four-ſcore.

Clariſſa candidly confeſſed, that in obeying the *commands* of her mother ſhe had made a ſacrifice of no leſs than her whole ſtock of health and ſpirits:" "I have not," ſaid ſhe, "been in bed for many nights! I have not laid down my poor aching head on the pillow of reſt before your hour of riſing."

He heard, he pitied, he loved, and he hoped to ſerve her, by uſing his influence with Lady Iſleworth to eaſe her daughter from ſome of thoſe labours with which pleaſure taxes her votaries, when they miſuſe her ſervice, by making it a toil inſtead of relaxation.

The good old gentleman deferred not his *eclairciſſement*, but ſeized on the firſt favourable opportunity to awaken the fears of Lady Iſleworth for the *life* of her daughter; a liberty ſo much reſented by this high-ſpirited woman, that in defiance of intereſt, gratitude, and all other obſtacles, ſhe forbade him to intermeddle in *her* family

family affairs—hinted, that, his *future* calls would be diſpenſed with—and, on pain of her eternal diſpleaſure, commanded Clariſſa never more to hold converſe with ſo vulgar a *cit*, who ought to confine himſelf to his counting-houſe, without preſuming to profane, by his *aukward* preſence, the elegant refinements, only calculated for the *very firſt* claſſes—people of birth and education! Which imperious interdiction was the death-blow of all that remained to Clariſſa of *real* tranquillity: ſhe wept—ſhe intreated, but all to no purpoſe.

She would even have diſregarded the maternal injunction as a leſſer evil than renouncing the friend who had every claim to her filial reſpect, and more than filial affection; but *that* friend loved her too ſincerely to *ſanction* an act of diſobedience, however amiable may be the ſource from whence it originated.

For her ſake alone Mr. Curry made no ſhew of the reſentment which he could not *but* feel, at an affront ſo little conſonant to what his conſcious, upright, honeſt heart had taught him to expect: all the notice he took of Lady Iſleworth's impertinence was to obey her orders, avoid her houſe; and, inſtead of ſeeing his favourite Clariſſa, to content himſelf by thinking

of her, with now and then making ſuch enquiries about her, from their common acquaintance, as oftener procured him pain than ſatisfaction. No body could tell him that Miſs Iſleworth looked *well*, but every body could inform him ſhe was, as uſual, to be ſeen with her mother, at all faſhionable places of public or private amuſement.

Such as I have juſt related was the untoward predicament in which ſtood the two families of Iſleworth and Curry, when, more from neceſſity than choice, Sir Frederick was forced, by a derangement of his affairs, to make a firſt advance towards a reconciliation.

A worthy man will never relax in the laws of hoſpitality, though it be an enemy that ſeeks the ſhelter of his roof. Mr. Curry on this ſcore received the Baronet with politeneſs.

Yet would he not conſent to relinquiſh the truſt repoſed in him by the father of Lady Iſleworth, becauſe ſuch a compliance ill aſſorted with his notions of rectitude: he alſo agreed to become the purchaſer of his Weſtmoreland eſtate, at an advanced price, and, as we have already ſaid, paid down a thouſand pounds depoſit-money, on a ſecond viſit from Sir Frederick

to

to announce the deceaſe of his aunt Lady Bridget; yet, amongſt many proofs of civility, nay, kindneſs, with which he diſmiſſed his *old* acquaintance but *new* gueſt, he did not condeſcend to accept a very preſſing invitation to renew his viſits in Portman-ſquare.

Speaking, as above, of the thouſand pounds, puts me in mind, that it is time we ſhould now go back to the breakfaſt-room, and ſee how the diſſatisfied party diſpoſed of themſelves for the reſt of the morning; I mean to be underſtood from the hours of three to ſix, the more early ones being entered on night's calendar, by ſuch people of ton who are at the pains to calculate time or ſeaſons.

CHAP. XIII.

THE HONEY MOON IN ITS FIRST QUARTER.

LADY ISLEWORTH aroſe in great ſtate from the arm-chair next the fire, in which ſhe had been ſeated, becauſe Lady Anne had previouſly refuſed to fill it, ſaying, with a laugh, as Sir Frederick was handing her to the poſt of ho-

nour, "that ſhe was not *yet* intitled to have the *eaſe* of her ſituation ſo *particularly* conſulted."

"Ring the bell, Clariſſa," ſaid her mother, as ſhe ſtepped forwards to take a ſurvey of her perſon in the glaſs.

The bell was rung—a ſervant entered, and her coach was ordered.

"I ſhall leave Arthur and Clariſſa to amuſe you, my dear Lady Anne," continued ſhe, addreſſing herſelf to the bride, "whilſt I go amongſt my friends to announce our felicity, and to my trades-people, to provide for your accommodation."

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Lady Ann, "be merciful and take us with you! I have all poſſible friendſhip for my ſiſter Clary; but, to be left behind with *only* her and one's *huſband*, the idea is inſupportable! How ridiculous Arthur and I ſhould feel ourſelves, if Miſs Iſleworth happens to be called away in your abſence, and we left alone to all the miſeries of a *tete-a-tete!* No, Madam, you cannot intend to be ſo inhuman."

"You need not diſturb my mother's plans on *that* account," replied Arthur, "for in half an hour

hour I ſhall be off for Nemwarket, where I ought to have been many days ago:—you ſtopped my courſe *once*, but I'll be d—d if any female in Britain ſhall ever again play me the ſame trick."

"Well, go your own way, incorrigible *Orſon*," ſaid her lively ladyſhip, "and if youdo but make your pilgrimage decently *long*, I might poſſibly be *glad* to ſee you again when you come back."

"As you pleaſe," cried he, "Good bye;" and ran out of the room, whilſt his father followed; and, overtaking him in the hall, deſired to exchange a few words with him in private. Arthur did not much like the reſtraint thus laid on his ſpeed; he ſubmitted with an ill grace; they adjourned together, and Sir Frederick opened the buſineſs.

"I fear, *Sir*, you have made a *bad* hand of it," ſaid he, "in taking the daughter of Lord Benvour *without* the conſent of her father, who I know to be a curſed obſtinate fellow."

"I fear ſo *too*," replied the ſon, "and if there was any cure in *repentance* for the *ſin* of matrimony, I ſhould certainly adopt it. *But*, Sir, give me leave *now* to purſue my more *agreeable* engagements: Lord Turfover and Jack Bypoſt wait

wait for me at Tatterſall's: the curſed matter you would ſpeak upon will take up more time than I *can* ſpare. I have bets depending to the tune of a thouſand, and I ſhall be thrown out of my chance if I delay my journey."

"Neceſſity has no law!" obſerved the Baronet, "*go* then, and may fortune ſpeed the plough! If you are ſucceſsful, I charge you ſend me by expreſs five hundred pounds, which I have immediate need for, to get out of the damn'deſt ſcrape I ever experienced."

"Depend on me, *if in my power*," ſaid Arthur, and off he went; whilſt Sir Frederick returned to take up his hat, intending to make a third viſit to Curry; but on ſo mortifying an errand, that had it been in his own election, he would rather have gone a hundred miles any other way. He met, as he was going back, Lady Ann, dragging Clariſſa towards the billiard-room, who had reluctantly conſented to divert her ladyſhip, in the abſence of her mother, with a game which *ſhe* did not underſtand, *but* on which her ſiſter proteſted *ſhe* doted to diſtraction.

Arthur, being once got clear of his father's houſe, little imagined that any other impediment would be thrown in the path of his appointment. Yet

Yet an impediment did ſtart up, which, with all his ſtrength, he could not have jumped over, but that he had, juſt before repleniſhed his famiſhed purſe with all that he could be certain to touch of Lord Benvour's enviable riches.

Lady Ann had received from her father's ſteward the half of her yearly ſtipend, which amounted to two hundred and fifty guineas, the day preceding her elopement; and, poſſeſſed of this ſum, together with a few valuable jewels, ſhe turned her back upon the *Wilderneſs*. The odd fifty was ſcattered in making their way to and from Gretna Green, Mr. Iſleworth having indifferently provided himſelf with the *poſſibles* for ſuch an expedition. The round two hundred fortunately remained, and were ſtill more fortunately repoſing in the pocket of Arthur, when the ſure hand of law fell upon his ſhoulder, within ſight of the houſe he had juſt quitted.

In plainer terms, he was arreſted upon an action which warranted every ſpecies of ſeverity, having contracted a debt of ninety-five pounds for a diamond-ring, in his minority, which debt, though maſter of ſome hundreds on coming of age, he manfully refuſed to pay.

Right

Right or wrong, the exaſperated tradeſman determined to lay hold of him; and the event ſhewed how well he judged the matter; for Arthur, who would have knocked the officer down, if he could have turned his time to no better account, thus attacked in the midſt of his preſſing engagements, not only paid the bill, but gave the fellow ten pieces of gold to divide between himſelf and the reſt of the ſuit; after which he happily joined his two friends at Tatterſall's, took a whet of brandy, drank confuſion to law-makers and law-executioners, curſed their grooms for faults they had not committed, and, in high ſpirits gallopped towards Newmarket, where, if a man pays but at the rate of twenty-ſhillings for every pound of fleſh his racers carry on their bones, that man is better off than his neighbours.

Sir Frederick Iſleworth, without once lifting his eyes above the pavement, in his long walk from Portman-ſquare to New Bond-ſtreet, might, in the moments of his peregrination, have been miſtaken for a man of *reflection:* indeed, if he ever thought in his whole life, this was certainly the ſeaſon for thinking.

A thouſand pounds to refund! and only half that ſum out of which it could be refunded!—

what

what to do, and what to ſay, afforded him, in a poetical phraſe, "food for contemplation, even to madneſs."

Buried in a ſleep-like reverie, he did not ſee many of his acquaintance who met or paſſed him, neither did his ploding pace or ſtudious features ſerve as a herald to proclaim him a man of *pleaſure*, *one* perſon only could diſtinguiſh *that* character through all its diſguiſes.

"It is ſurely him!—it is ſurely him!" exclaimed a fine looking woman, with a footman walking behind her at a reſpectful diſtance, on the oppoſite ſide of the ſtreet, to which Sir Frederick was croſſing—then pauſed, and again cried out, "Yes, I ſwear it is Sir Frederick himſelf!"

Had any accents but thoſe of Mrs. *Snug* announced him, in his haſte to get forward, he might not have honoured the exclamation with any degree of attention; but, rouſed by the well-known dulcet voice of his ſyren, what he thought the moſt happy idea his wiſdom ever engendered, made him ſpring almoſt into her arms, begging to know, with undeſcribable agitation, whether ſhe had diſpoſed of the money he had ſupplied her with the day before?

"To be ſure I have!" replied the lady, ſomewhat ſtartled, "but why do you enquire?"

"Only, my dear creature! if you *could* grant me the loan of it, *juſt* for eight and forty hours, you will do me a *very* ſingular ſervice."

"And myſelf ſingular pleaſure," replied the ſprightly dame, recovering from her ſurpriſe, "*if it was in my power*; but, pray remember, that my *huſband's* neceſſities is a ſinking-fund, that ſwallows up all the riches *I* can gather together."

The diſappointed lover curſed *all* huſbands, but—her's in particular. However, as no time was now to be waſted on barren ſubjects, they made an aſſignation to meet again in two days, and ſeparated.

CHAP. XIV.

ARRANGEMENT.

IT would be difficult to deſcribe what were the feelings of Sir Frederick as he approached the merchant's door; they were ſuch as can be only underſtood

underſtood by a proud man, who, in ſtruggling with proverty, loſes what is more valuable to him than life itſelf, *his* conſequence, *his* hauteur, *his* importance! or, to ſpeak allegorically, one who is forced to lay down his coſtly robe of oſtentation, and to cloath himſelf in the plain garb of humility.

The knocker trembled in his hand—the door opened—Mr. Curry was at home—and he followed the ſervant into the preſence of his maſter, who got up to receive him, with ſo much cordiality in his manner, ſo much benevolence in his countenance, that the Baronet began to take courage; and the hearty ſhake of his hand, which gave him the welcome he had reaſon to deſpair of, was returned with equal warmth, if not equal ſincerity.

"I thank you," ſaid the merchant, as ſoon as they were ſeated, "for this early viſit: I ſee you fine gentlemen can be punctual when buſineſs is to be ſettled. I have appointed my lawyer to meet you here in half an hour; our bargain will ſoon be completed; after which we will go to the bank, where I will make a transfer to *you* of the ſum agreed on for your Weſtmoreland eſtate.——You are ſilent," continued he, "perhaps you repent of your bargain? If that ſhould

ſhould be the caſe I ſhall, not inſiſt on you fulfilling it."

Sir Frederick was ſilent, for no other reaſon than that he did not know what to ſay. The offer of letting him off reſtored him to ſpeech; he ſtarted up—ſtood with his back to the fire—looked down on his buckles—took out his ſnuff-box—and, as he opened the lid, he opened his mouth alſo.

"My dear Sir,"—he lifted his hand to his noſe—"this is execrable ſnuff!——I have done myſelf the *honor*, my dear Sir, to attend your levee this morning, *on* the moſt deteſtable occaſion you can poſſibly imagine! I 'am ſhocked to tell you, that our agreement *muſt* diſſolve, not from any caprice of my own,"—ſuppreſſing an oath, "no, my very good friend, I was but too happy in your generous proceedings; *but* a fatal accident has happened ſince I ſaw you laſt, that makes it impoſſible for me to profit by them."

Here he was interrupted—Mr. Curry felt himſelf alarmed leaſt his favourite Clariſſa might ſome how or other be involved in the accident Sir Frederick ſeemed ſo truly to lament, and aſked him eagerly if Miſs Iſleworth was well?

He

He ſlightly anſwered, "Yes, very well;" and proceeded to explain the reſurrection of Lady Bridget, treating the ſubject with more ſorrow than he would have beſtowed on the memory of his wife and children, had the ſword or peſtilence ſwept them all away from the face of the earth; but when, with mortified looks, and almoſt with tears of contrition, he revealed his incapacity to repay the thouſand pounds advanced in part of the purchaſe, *this* was the remarkable anſwer he received from the blunt but noble minded merchant.

"Sir Frederick, you are not only welcome to the money you have ſpent, but alſo to a ſecond thouſand, on no other ſecurity than your own note, if ſuch a loan will be ſerviceable to you."

"Do I conſtrue you right, my good Sir'!' cried the aſtoniſhed Sir Frederick, "is it poſſible, my dear Mr. Curry, that you ſhould *certainly* intend me ſo *capital* an obligation!—a favour ſo much above my hopes, my expectations, my deſerts!" He might have continued longer in the ſame ſtrain, if my *good*, ſir, my *dear* Mr. Curry, had not laid an embargo on the fluency of his expreſſions, by again declaring it was his *full* intent and *meaning* to accommodate him with the

the ſum ſpecified.—"But," added he, "I do *not* tell you that I ſhall advance it *unconditionally*."

"I underſtand you," ſaid the Baronet, my ſon *ſhall* join in the ſecurity.

"I have already told you, Sir Frederick," he replied, "that I will accept *no* other ſecurity than your *own* note. But we men of buſineſs never part with our money unleſs for intereſt or premium:—*intereſt* I relinquiſh, *premium* I expect."

"Take it then, for thou art an honeſt fellow!" cried out the delighted Baronet; "keep back half; give me another five hundred, and I will acknowledge myſelf your debtor for *two* thouſand! And now, my dear friend, let us cloſe the bargain *this* moment, that I may carry the money to Lady Iſleworth, who tells me twenty times a day that ſhe is in want of a thouſand neceſſaries."

"Sir, you miſcomprehend me," ſaid the merchant, calmly, "I have indeed ſignified my expectation of a *premium*, but it muſt be of my *own* naming; and I ſhall tell you before hand, I ſhall aſk what is of more value than the two thouſand

thouſand pounds I am ready to lend you, ten times counted over."

Sir Frederick ſtarted, and again applied to his ſnuff-box, ſaying coldly, and in a tone of diſpleaſure, "I profeſs, *Miſter* Curry, I do not underſtand you."

"Then Sir," he replied, "give me your attention for ten minutes, and I hope to explain myſelf to your ſatisfaction." Sir Frederick bowed *ſtately*, and the merchant proceeded.

The tale he told would have intereſted any other hearer; *but* Sir Frederick liſtened per force, and betrayed no ſympton of animation till it was brought to a concluſion; except that turning his face in diſguſt to the fire, and biting his nails almoſt to the quick, he ſometimes uttered a haſty ſarcaſm on men who did not know their own minds, and a damn on his own involvements, which made him ſubſervient to their changes. But theſe ſounds of diſcontent being only the birth of a whiſper, they aſcended the chimney, without touching upon the ear of Mr. Curry, whoſe tale, for brevity's ſake, I ſhall take leave to curtail.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

ALL IS WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

THE merchant informed Sir Frederick, that he had a ſiſter lately arrived from India, the widow of an officer, a man of rank, who for many years enjoyed the firſt command at Bengal;—that the death of her huſband having broken the ties which held her from her native land, ſhe was come back to her family, with a ſad heart and ſhattered conſtitution.

"I will no longer," added he, "hold out the language of an uſurer; *if* you do *me* the honour to accept a favour, I ſhall do myſelf the pleaſure to *ſolicit* one of far greater conſequence—the company of Miſs Iſleworth for a few weeks, or as long a time as you can conſent to part with her, I am moſt ambitious to obtain for the beloved ſiſter of whom I have been ſpeaking, and to whom I never ſhall be able to preſent a gift *ſo* precious as ſuch a companion, who will have the goodneſs to forward the recovery of her health,

health, cheriſh its firſt dawn, and ſooth her ſorrows."

"And is this really *all* that you require of me!" ſaid Sir Frederick, brightening into rapture. "Why, at this rate, my good friend, you make me doubly your debtor. *Clariſſa* ſhall attend your ſiſter either in town or country, as ſoon as ſhe is ready to receive her; *but* how long ſhe may continue her gueſt it is not in my power to ſay—that depends on circumſtances; we have a brilliant eſtabliſhment in view for her, the event of which muſt determine the length of her viſit."

Afterwards the converſation was lengthened by Sir Frederick's giving Mr. Curry the hiſtory of Arthur's marriage, and explaining the nature of his views for Clariſſa; which being ended, they parted, with much good humour on one ſide, and much joy on the other, the merchant having preſented the Baronet with the ſecond bank note. Conſonant to his plans, and ſuppreſſing his own impatience, he conſented alſo not to call upon him for the performance of his promiſe, till Lady Iſleworth had given herſelf a ball, and Lord Clarence an opportunity to declare himſelf the lover of Clariſſa, which, Mr. Curry archly obſerved, would be killing two birds

birds with one ſtone. I hardly know how to ſay whether he *did* or did *not* wiſh ſucceſs to the latter part of this family enterpriſe; for, though it was very certain he was warmly intereſted in the happy eſtabliſhment of Miſs Iſleworth, yet it is altogether *as* certain that he had no particular predileƈtion in favour of nobility by the *lump*, nor did he think a peer better or wiſer than another man, *unleſs* the benevolence of his heart, *and* the prudence of his aƈtions, decidedly gave him the precedence.

Sir Frederick, lightly meaſuring his ſteps homeward, called his thoughts to council on a very important queſtion, whether it would be wiſeſt, diſcreeteſt, beſt, to let Lady Iſleworth into the tranſaƈtion of the morning? or, by ſmothering the whole affair, keep poſſeſſion of his newly acquired wealth, without being forced to divide it on the ſcore of domeſtic exigencies? If he buried in his own breaſt the good-natured generoſity of Curry, there could be no opening for him to divulge *his* part of the agreement, or to obtain the conſent of her ladyſhip that Clariſſa ſhould make good his engagement, which, when diſcloſed, he apprehended would raiſe *ſome* troubleſome altercation; and, if he was a coward on the occaſion, moſt married men will be able to enter

enter experimentally into the nature of his timidity.

He paused—he reaſoned—he ruminated; at length, remembering that he had an evening appointment for high play, his wavering judgment ſettled into ſomething like deciſion; and he reſolved not *entirely* to conceal his good fortune, but ſo far to temporize with it, as to acknowledge her guardian's politeneſs in not demanding *that* half of the depoſit-money already ſpent; and this he thought a ſufficient communication to obtain her concurrence with his plans, eſpecially as they have been arranged ſo cautiouſly, that Clariſſa's ruſticating would by no means interfere with their deſigns upon Lord Clarence; "for," ſaid he, as he purſued his way, talking to himſelf, as men of pleaſure ſometimes will do,—"for," ſaid he, "if Lord Clarence does not lay hold of the opportunity *we* give him to ſpeak *out*, he has no ſerious mind to the girl; and if he *does* declare himſelf, he may viſit her in any other place as well as in Portman-ſquare."

This was his laſt determination, and his laſt expreſſion, as he ſtopped at his own door, juſt in time to offer his hand to Lady Iſleworth, who

was

was at that moment ſtepping out of her carriage.

And here I alſo ſtop to apologiſe for having ſent Arthur to Newmarket, the young ladies to the billiard-table, and attending Sir Frederick to the city, without having yet endeavoured to trace her ladyſhip's wheels through the various circumvolutions, with this *only* excuſe to offer for ſo palpable an omiſſion, *namely*, that I never in my life had a capacity to do or ſay more than one thing at a time: but as diligence is in ſome caſes a remedy for neglect, I ſhall now purſue, and try to overtake, the ſtraggling moments that have eſcaped me.

Lady Iſleworth began this eventful morning at the wrong end of buſineſs. The firſt call ſhe made was at Mr. Mayo's the upholſterer, where ſhe gave orders for a ſuit of ſilk damaſk hangings, ſtate-bed, and as many other little neceſſaries, for the accommodation of Lady Ann, as, when entered on that faſhionable tradeſman's book, would have cut a daſhing figure; to which ſort of daſh her ladyſhip was ſo far from raiſing objections, that it was never her cuſtom to aſk the price of *any* thing, but to order *every* thing; "ſuch ſcrutinies," ſhe would obſerve, "became only

only the vulgar, and, when adopted by genteel people, brought them nearly on a level."

With a million of charges to have her newly purchaſed articles ſent home as expeditiouſly as poſſible, ſhe was tripping through the ſhop, when her attention being ſuddenly arreſted by a curious chair, which ſhe had not taken notice of before, ſhe turned back to give it a ſecond look, when a ſcreen of equal beauty divided her admiration: the temptation was not to be reſiſted; the chairs would be wanted at her grand gala—the ſcreens were *divine*, and ſhe *could* not do without them; of courſe they were added to her liſt of *neceſſaries*.

The heads of her horſes were now turned towards the city; but in her way to Parker's, in Fleet-ſtreet, ſhe ſtopped at many other ſhops; and, as far as one can be ſaid to buy without laying out money, ſhe bought ſilks, flowers, and feathers, to a large amount.

The laſt object that hung itſelf out to catch her notice was ſuſpended from a pawn-broker's window—it was a watch and chain ſtudded with diamonds. "Ah!" cried ſhe, "what a ſweet preſent for Lady Ann!" Her eyes ſparkled with the pleaſant idea;—ſhe pulled the check, and

and ſent one of her tall footmen (for ſhe had two behind her carriage) to bring the man and the watch *that* moment before her.

A little figure, more like a weaſel than a man, obeyed the ſummons. She eagerly caught the trinket from his ſhaking hand, put it in her pocket, and, bidding the ſervant give him a card of direction, ordered herſelf to be conveyed to Parker's.

The dimunitive ſeller of ſecond-hand finery, gaſping with agony for the fate of his toy, demanded to have it returned, or immediate payment of one hundred guineas, which was the price affixed to it on a ſcrap of paper, but which had paſſed by her ladyſhip's obſervations.

Finding the trader would have the *watch* or the *money*, ſhe gave him back the former, the latter not being in her poſſeſſion, and with an air of ſovereign contempt, bad him learn how to treat people of *quality*, who condeſcended to ſtop at his little dirty *den* of a ſhop. The man only *grinned* a reply, and carried off the diſputed prize in triumph.

It may tire a reader's patience, were we to detain him at every door where it was the pleaſure

ſure of Lady Iſleworth either to get out of her coach or to give her directions from within. We will therefore content ourſelves with merely ſaying, that her ladyſhip remained ſo long as Parker's in chuſing luſtres for her ball room, that when ſhe came home and was met at the door by Sir Frederick, the firſt bell had given notice that a dinner was provided, which, *all* things conſidered, is not to be ſet down as one of thoſe common occurrences which daily happen in families of irregularity.

CHAP. XVI.

A NEW CHARACTER.

LORD CLARENCE, the only gueſt invited to their table on this memorable day, ruſhed out of his chariot, ten minutes after Sir Frederick with the three ladies had ſat down at table—was preſented to the *bride*—paid his compliments to *every* body—particularized nobody—and, with the familiar well-bred eaſe of faſhion, threw

threw himſelf into a chair, purpoſely placed by the ſide of Miſs Iſleworth.

Clariſſa turned pale or red at every inſignificant ſentence which, in the courſe of a general converſation, he undeſignedly addreſſed to herſelf; but whether theſe ſudden variations of countenance proceeded from approbation or diſguſt, is a ſecret that will be diſcloſed in the future pages of this hiſtory.

Lord Clarence was tall, thin, and far from being inelegant—his features not bad, and his countenance expreſſive; but that expreſſion had more in it of pride, than paſſions of any kind, particularly of the *tender* ſort; yet his heart was really occaſionally ſuſceptible of the ſofteſt, though not of the moſt *laſting* impreſſions;—his manners were unexceptionable, at leaſt they were univerſally pleaſing; as, with much ſtudy, he had obtained the excluſive privilege of adapting them to all conditions of man, but more eſpecially of womankind:—his general character may be compriſed in two ſhort ſentences—by his own ſex he was called a damn'd knowing fellow for a lord; and by the other, a dear dangerous creature, with whom it was more ſafe to truſt their *purſes* than their *hearts*.

His

His Lordſhip, enquiring for his friend Arthur, and being told that a few hours before he had taken a trip to Newmarket, his large black penetrating eyes caſt a ſide-long glance at Lady Ann, as if for the firſt time he had thought it worth his while to take a ſurvey of her pretenſions to beauty. No, glance, however ſide-long, could paſs unnoticed by the perſon to whom it was directed. *Too* much a woman of *ton* to be troubled with any thing like *mauvaiſe honte*, ſhe caught at the ſilent-expreſſion, and explained its meaning, by aſking him, "when *he* was a *married* man, whether he liked to be faſtened to his wife's ſide like a watch chain?"

His Lordſhip, who perhaps was thinking of ſomething elſe, ſtarted, and even coloured, at the abruptneſs of her queſtion; but, as the reply was not ſeaſoned with an equal quantity of *attic ſalt*, we ſhall not force it on the palate of our readers.

Clariſſa engroſſed more of the noble viſitor's attention than ſhe ſeemed to deſire, or would have received with her uſual politeneſs, had not the looks of her father and mother, which perpetually ſcrutinized the leaſt of her motions, kept her in awful ſubmiſſion; the heaving ſigh was ſuppreſſed, and the tear that ſtruggled in

her eye was forbidden to flow; yet, through the thickeſt covering ſhe could throw over her feelings, a common obſerver might have read this inſcription on her countenance—*My heart is not at eaſe.*

Lady Ann certainly was not over and above delighted with the viſible preference given to her ſiſter-in-law, and contrived to make herſelf very pleaſant, and the object of her envy *very* unpleaſant, by turning them both into ridicule, declaring, that if Arthur Iſleworth had ever ſhewn a *marked* preference to *her* in public, or even in a private circle, ſhe ſhould have *hated* him—ending with a broad laugh at thoſe prudiſh girls (glancing at Clariſſa) who ſet up to receive their lovers with all the formality of a ſchool-miſtreſs, and all the inſenſibility of an automaton.

Sir Frederick tried to give th e onverſation another turn—talked of the preſent war—of the laſt new opera—of horſe-racing—and the bench of biſhops.

Lady Iſleworth, ſtill paying the greateſt deference to her daughter-in-law, but fearing my Lord might be diſpleaſed with her flippancy, volunteered in the ſervice of dividing his attention,

on, and ſtunned her hearers with a confuſed medley of the fatigues of ſhopping—the impertinent delays of trades people—the careleſſneſs of coachmen—the ſtupidity of footmen—of her own indefatigable labours—of her own purchaſes—of her own cleverneſs—and, laſt of all, of her own intended ball; which very naturally put it into the head of Lord Clarence to remind Clariſſa ſhe had promiſed to be his partner, adding ſomething very tender, but in ſo low a whiſper as made it optional whether ſhe would or would not make any *ſerious* uſe of his profeſſions; and ſhe choſe the latter, pretending not to have heard them.

When the ladies withdrew after dinner, Miſs Illeworth, recollecting that ſhe had not ſeen her two little ſiſters for the whole day, ran up to the nurſery, and, in her abſence, gave an opportunity to her mother of diſplaying a great deal of eloquence at *her* expence.

Bitterly did ſhe complain to Lady Ann of Clariſſa's late change in perſon, manners, and humour; her vehemence alone might have convinced even a deaf obſerver how little ſhe was ſatisfied. Lady Ann wanted neither ears, eyes, *or* reliſh, for ſuch ſpirited railings, when laviſhed on a *rival* beauty, or a *dear* friend, the con-

venient appellation for young ladies who love by *profeſſion* and hate by *inſtinct*. Every fault imputed to the *favorite* of Lord Clarence, acted upon the diſeaſed mind of Lady Ann, like Briſtol milk on a conſumptive habit of body.

"I can in no manner account for ſo extraordinary a revolution," cried Lady Iſleworth, "it is abſolute witchcraft! Did you ever ſee a complexion ſo faded? Her ſkin was *once* remarkably white, and ſee! what is it *now* but chalk? —abſolute chalk! Then her perſon—do but look at her perſon! ſix months ago ſhe was juſt ſuch a figure as myſelf, but there is *now* no veſtige of grace remaining! Would you believe, Lady Ann, that, with all the authority of a mother, I am not able to make her dreſs like *other* people! or will ſhe be perſuaded to put on rouge!—it is impoſſible to give you any idea of her obſtinacy."

"It is impoſſible," replied the other, ſhrugging her ſhoulders, "that any hints from your ladyſhip ſhould make me wiſer than I am. I know Clary is ſtubborn—and I am ſure ſhe is in love!"

"In love!" then it muſt be with my Lord Clarence."

"With

"With Lord Clarence! no, I will be ſworn ſhe has no partiality for his lordſhip."

"Nay, Lady Ann, it can be with no body elſe, as ſhe *knows* Sir Frederick and I are *determined* ſhe ſhall marry him."

"Lord! my dear Lady Iſleworth, what can *that* ſignify? Remember, I *foretold* that ſhe will reject the huſband of *your* choice, and take the man of her *own*."

The lovely ſubject of this chit chat moment came into the room, leading in each hand a pretty little girl, who for the firſt time were preſented to Lady Ann, and graciouſly received; ſhe not only ſaluted them very kindly, but alſo paid them the particular compliment of ſaying, ſhe hated *all* children *but* themſelves. Their mother, *too*, condeſcended to bid them hold up their heads; and, telling them, when their elder ſiſters had got huſbands it would be *their* turn *next*, ſent them back to their nurſery.

Mean time the father of Clariſſa, and his noble gueſt, being left alone, the former puſhed about the bottle, as one man will do by another when any deſigns are formed againſt his purſe or his underſtanding.

Sir

Sir Frederick had watched the peer's looks, and ſaw his eyes following the ſteps of his daughter, as ſhe left the room, with a mixture of tenderneſs and energy, that gave cauſe to hope the preſent opportunity would be as well as *another* to bring him to the deſtined confeſſion; with which view he filled bumper after bumper, until he thought his lordſhip in a proper *cue* for ſounding.

"Come, my Lord," ſaid he, in a jocoſe tone, "I will give you a *ſentiment*, which I am perſuaded no widower in Britain would refuſe to pledge;"—he drew towards him a larger glaſs than he had uſed before, which he made to run over, and, taking hold of Clarence's hand, he drank—"*Let all the ſingle be married, and let all the married be happy!*"

"An excellent toaſt!" cried his lordſhip, "I double your libation!" and at one draught ſwallowed down a pint bumper of Madeira.

All might have done well, had the Baronet's ſcheme on the ſenſes of his paſſive gueſt ended here; but in ſtriving to captivate them *in toto*, he ſurrendered his own. They were differently affected, yet both too much crippled to enter the walk of buſineſs. Sir Frederick became capricious

capricious without meaning—the noble Peer, ſilent, without deſign: the former ſtaggered off, with notes in his pocket for fifteen hundred pounds, to make *ſomething* or *nothing* of them, at a noted gaming-houſe;—the latter found his way to the drawing-room, ſat down by the ſide of Clariſſa, and fell aſleep.

If he was not before *exceedingly* deſireable in the eyes of his miſtreſs, his preſent ridiculous ſituation did not ſerve to render him more amiable. But ſo unlike to each other are the minds of women, that the ſame ſcene which diſguſted Miſs Iſleworth delighted her mother and Lady Ann, who played a hundred tricks to rouſe him from his ſtupor. Clariſſa took no part in their amuſement. Her mother would not permit her to retire, as ſhe wiſhed to have done; therefore ſhe withdrew to a diſtant corner of the room, entertained herſelf with a book, and left them to purſue their frolicks on the inanimate corps of poor Lord Clarence.

Some of the many remedies they uſed to reſtore his ſenſes at laſt took effect; he awaked in confuſion not to be deſcribed—ſtammered out an apology—reeled towards Clariſſa, and, againſt all poſſible reſiſtance, imprinted on her fair hand the

the feveriſh kiſs of inebriety—then vaniſhed out of the room, to which he returned no more.

CHAP. XVII.

WHICH HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE TITLE OF THIS BOOK.

MR. CURRY had a country-houſe on Enfield Chaſe, to which he had taken his ſiſter on her arrival from India, not more for the benefit of air, than to afford her that ſort of agreeable ſolitude a rational woman, who has paſſed her grand climacteric, will always prefer to buſy ſcenes of irrational diſſipation.

Mrs. St. Edmonds was one of the few women who come under the deſcription of *rational*: ſhe diſtinguiſhed *real* from counterfeit enjoyments, therefore choſe the ſubſtance and rejected the ſhadow. She had been an excellent daughter—ſiſter—wife, in defiance of the keen taunts with which faſhion will ever ridicule thoſe duties it does not ſanction.

On the day of General St. Edmonds's death, the thirtieth year of their happy union was fully completed; twenty they had paſſed together in the

the dominions of their prince, within the boundaries of Europe---the other ten was ſtill devoted to the military ſervice, but in another quarter of the globe, and with unabated ardour. Mrs. St. Edmonds accompanied her huſband to Bengal, where his martial glory, and the mildneſs of his adminiſtration, will raiſe to his memory, in that country, a laſting monument of his valor, mercy, and juſtice: nor will it ever be forgotten by the inhabitants, that the brighteſt example of every female virtue was given them, in the irreproachable conduct of the beloved wife of their beloved governor.

To the reſidence of this lady Mr. Curry directed his ſteps, or rather the ſteps of his horſes, as ſoon as the laſt conference between him and Sir Frederick Iſleworth was brought to a concluſion; and how much it ended to the ſatisfaction of both parties has already been related.

It was almoſt dark before he got to Enfield. His ſiſter, who expected and had waited dinner for him, began to be uneaſy that he was not yet come: her imagination had been buſy in forming a thouſand accidents that might have befallen him; and the inſtant he ſtood before her ſhe chid him, but with a ſweetneſs peculiar to herſelf, for having ſo long made her ſuffer all the pains and penalties that fear, united to fancy, could invent for her torment.

Before he would enter on his defence, he deſired dinner might be ſerved, after which there would be time ſufficient, he ſaid, to ſatisfy all her inquiries.

A *tête-a-tête* is generally ſtigmatized by the appellation of ſtupid; and when made up of two lovers, who have loved long enough to love themſelves out of love—*or* two fools, who are chained together by neceſſity—*or* two perſons who call themſelves friends, yet ſpend the hours which ſhould be dedicated to the open frankneſs of friendſhip in ſuſpecting each other, in locking up their thoughts, as they would do their riches, if a thief was at the door; in any or all ſuch ſituations, the term *ſtupid* is but a poor epithet to expreſs the apathy, folly, or wickedneſs, of which ſuch *tête-à-têtes* are compoſed.

On the other hand, though ſuch inſtances are to be produced, does it follow that two people, whoſe ſouls overflow with affection, and whoſe minds are ſtored with information—does it follow, I ſay, that *they* ſhould grow tired of one another's ſociety, merely becauſe there is not a third perſon to liſten to, or to join in their converſation? As well may we quarrel with nature, and ſay we cannot uſe our hands or our feet, becauſe we had but *two* of a ſort, and think *three* would have done better. If there are ſuch diſcontented mortals, the amiable brother and ſiſter of

of whom I am ſpeaking were certainly out of the number, as they would not have thought their deſtiny unpleaſant, had they been condemned to feaſt a moiety of their hours on the food of their own eloquence, ſeaſoned with that fraternal tenderneſs which gives a zeſt to all domeſtic entertainments.

"Well, now, my dear Elizabeth," ſaid Mr. Curry, the cloth being firſt removed, "I will tell you what the buſineſs was that detained me ſo late in London."

"Oh! pray do," ſhe replied, "for there is ſomething ſo myſteriouſly pleaſant in your countenance, that I can aſſure you my curioſity *was* infinitely greater than my appetite."

"Then, perhaps," returned he, "you have already gueſſed that you are in part the cauſe of my playing the truant."

"Me, brother, the cauſe!" repeated Mrs. St. Edmonds, how is that poſſible?"

"Yes, *you* ſiſter; for I have this morning ſtaid in town to make a purchaſe, which I hope to preſent very ſoon to your acceptance."

"With all poſſible gratitude," cried ſhe, "I am really ſorry you ſhould have laid out your *money* on ſo improper a ſubject. I have already more finery than I know what to do with; and meant

to

to have aſked your recommendetion of ſome young woman, to whom a diviſion of them may be uſeful."

"Well, well," ſaid her brother, ſmiling, "perhaps I may do ſo when I am more at leiſure; but the preſent I have bought for you this day is not to be ſet down amongſt the *trifles* in your poſſeſſion: you may judge of its value by its coſt. What think you of one ſingle jewel, for which I have advanced *two thouſand* pounds, and call it the beſt bargain I ever made in my life."

"Heaven help me, brother!" exclaimed Mrs. St. Edmonds, "what is this riddle you call upon me to explain? I can form *no* idea of your meaning. A jewel that has coſt you *two thouſand* pounds! and this extravagant purchaſe made for *me*—for an old figure!—Oh! the tale is too ridiculous to gain credit! Dear George, ſpeak to my underſtanding, and do not over-tax my credulity!

"There is ſomething," he replied, "ſo rational in your requeſt, that I ſhould forfeit my claim to candour if I did not tell you the whole honeſt truth, that you may no longer have cauſe to ſuppoſe I think *you* a fool, or give you ſtill more reaſon to conſider *me* as a puppy, unfit to be truſted with my own money or my *own* conduct.—Do you remember my little favourite Clariſſa Iſleworth?"

"Remember

"Remember her!" ſaid ſhe, "yes; and at this diſtance of time I recall every ſweet feature of her cherub face, with much more preciſion than I can recollect what I myſelf was thirty years ago. But what of this charming child? I have often intended to aſk you about her; and yet, in the multiplicity of my own affairs, have as often forgot to intereſt myſelf in her's: you cannot oblige me more than by informing me of her fate—I ſincerely hope it has been a happy one."

"Her *fate*," he anſwered, "if marriage is to be conſidered its ultimatum, is not yet decided; but, if you mean to aſk after her preſent ſituation and purſuits, I have only to ſay, they are much of the ſame nature with thoſe of other young women, whoſe misfortune it is to have a *fool* for their father, and a *coquette* for their *mother*."

"Ah! it is a thouſand pities," cried Mrs. St. Edmonds, ſighing, "alas! then I fear it is all over with your once amiable Clary!"

"I hope better things," ſaid her brother. "Whatever droſs her pure mind may have imbibed from education or example, I expect your precepts will ratify hereafter: ſhe is to be your gueſt for a few weeks, and *much* good may be done

done in a *little* time. She has every propenſity to thoſe virtues which ſet your ſex above all other works of the creation, and I think we ſhall find no great difficulty in calling them into action, though at preſent I believe they are of a negative ſpecies. *This*, my ſiſter, is the jewel of which I boaſted—this is the *purchaſe* I have made; for, in lending the father two thouſand pounds that I may obtain the company of his daughter, I have ample cauſe to warrant my calling it a *gift*, rather than a *loan!* The ſpendthrift, who will not be juſt to himſelf, *can* not be equitable to others."

"But, my good brother," ſaid Mrs. St. Edmonds, interrupting him, "are you ſure I ſhall think *ſo* highly of your jewel as *you* do? or, that your bringing her to viſit me will not diminiſh *from* rather than add *to* my comforts, which are, through your own kindneſs, already abundant? or, do you not know, that it is the hardeſt taſk in the world to domeſticate a fine lady? To be plain with you, there is no animal in the creation, in my opinion, ſo little fitted for uſe or companionſhip, as the preſent modern *Miſſes*, ſpringing from the preſent *modern* parents! My ſituation in India made me know much more of theſe troubleſome girls than I deſired *to* know. Mr. St. Edmonds and I were continually peſtered with

with recommendations. Several of them, whoſe birth was good and educations faſhionable, we received not only under our patronage but under our roof;—allow me to add, that I never was better pleaſed, both on their accounts and my own, as when *they* got huſbands, and *I* got rid of their ſociety.

"I ſee you ſmile," continued ſhe, "but I have not done yet; let me ſay out *my* ſay, and then I will permit you to ſet aſide all my objections—*if you can.* I am willing to agree with you, that Clariſſa Iſleworth *was* one of the lovelieſt, and the moſt amaiable, and the moſt faſcinating of children—that, *had* ſhe remained under your tuition—*had* my dear ſiſter lived long enough to aſſiſt you in finiſhing the work ſo happily begun, there could be no room for doubting her maturer years would have made good all the promiſes of infancy. On the contrary, taken from you at an age when young minds are moſt ſuſceptible of right or wrong impreſſions, I think there is reaſon on *my* ſide for ſuppoſing, that all your *early* inſtructions were ſuperſeded by the precepts, and, what is ſtill more forcible, the example of her butterfly mother, whoſe houſe if it cannot be called the *reſidence* of vice, muſt be conſidered as the occaſional *receptacle* for the votaries of vice. After all, if you have, in your intended

intended acquiſition to your ſmall family number, the goodneſs to conſult *my* inclinations, I ſhall certainly accommodate them to *your* wiſh; but when a trial *is* made, I demand to reſign the honour of Miſs Iſleworth's company, provided we ſhould happen to be diſſatisfied with each other."

"Read that letter, Elizabeth," cried the merchant, exultingly, preſenting a paper which he had taken from his pocket-book at the beginning of this intereſting explanation, "and let us ſee on what your unbiaſſed judgment will decide, without the interfence of partiality.

She received it ſmilingly.

"You need not read it aloud," he added, "for I have read it many times, and remember all its contents. It was written in reply to ſome good advice, concerning *filial* obedience, which I beſtowed upon her, finding ſhe was more inclined to break through its laws than to obſerve them; when, ſix months ago, Lady Iſleworth took it into her head to forbid me any intercourſe with *her* family, the poor child applied to me for abſolution, if ſhe broke through the *rigid* interdiction.—I ſaid, *No.* And now I make you a judge of her heart, by the anſwer ſhe returned to my *decided* negative."

"Yes,

"Yes, I ſhall love this girl, in ſpite of my former opinions!" muttered Mrs. St. Edmonds, ſpeaking inwardly as ſhe peruſed the letter, her fine though emaciated figure, and once beautiful countenance, receiving all the advantages that action and animation can impart, "Yes, I ſhall certainly love her! But, brother," continued ſhe, "I am not content to keep all theſe pretty ſentiments to myſelf.—I am *your* convert—we muſt read and admire them together."

"As you pleaſe," returned he, viſibly delighted; "eloquence may ſometimes tire, but goodneſs *never*."——Then followed the epiſtle, which may be found in the next chapter.

CHAP. XVIII.

LETTER.

"WHY, my dear Sir, will you command me "to preſerve *one* duty at the price of forfeiting "*many?* Without hardening my heart to the claims of *nature*, I am equally ſuſceptible to thoſe of *gratitude!*

"And

" And is it *you*—is it *really* you, who can ſo " coldly, I was going to ſay *cruelly*, forbid me " to throw myſelf at your feet, to confeſs my " errors, perhaps—ah! how cordial the hope! " perhaps to have received your forgiveneſs?— " Will you not allow a ſimple girl, though led " aſtray from the path into which you early con- " ducted her, to reaſon with, to perſuade you " out of a purpoſe ſo afflicting? Do not baniſh " from your boſom *her* who will ſoon, I fear, " have no refuge but in *your* protection! Do " not puſh off, on an ocean hard to weather, the " poor little bark you ſometimes delighted to " deck with the enſigns of truth and rectitude! " The luſtre of theſe colours may have been " tarniſhed, but are not yet *utterly* deſtroyed.— " Condeſcend, only once more, to become the " pilot of your *own* works, and, though ſadly " diſordered, *your* regulation will reſtore them " to order.

" When you ſay you will *not* receive me at " *your* houſe, though I ſhould have the hardi- " neſs to viſit there unſanctioned by my mo- " ther; or call on me at my father's, without " it be in conformity with her *expreſs* invita- " tion; when you add—My dear child, I will " never teach you any leſſon where the word " *duty* is blotted by contention, much leſs

" where

" where it is *obliterated* by *actual* diſobedience,—
" had you conſidered, when you pronounced
" this *hard* ſentence, to what a cruel neceſſity
" it reduced me—had you reflected on the ob-
" ligations of filial duty I owe to *yourſelf*, with
" the ſame impartiality that I *do*, you muſt have
" confeſſed, the ſacrifice you would exact from
" me you did not expect I could perform with-
" out grief, without tears, without remon-
" ſtrating! I do *more* than remonſtrate; I write
" on my bended knees, and intreat, with all the
" fervour of which my heart is capable, that
" you will, as uſual, admit to your preſence,
" your moſt grateful, obedient, and dutiful
" daughter,

" CLARISSA ISLEWORTH."

" You did not, it ſeems, comply," ſaid Mrs. St. Edmonds, " with the prayer of your gentle petitioner; how could you reſiſt ſo pathetic a prayer?"

" I ſeldom retract from my word, becauſe I ſeldom give it lightly," he replied. " I had well conſidered her ſituation—I would have laid down half my poſſeſſions to have ſaved her from unneceſſary ſorrow; but, to fill her mind with preſent eaſe, I muſt alſo have ſtored it with food for future remorſe. So I even ſent her word

word to be a good girl—to depend on my fatherly affection—to keep up her ſpirits—perform her duty—and expect that I ſhould lay hold on the firſt opportunity which preſented itſelf, *without* infringement of eſtabliſhed preliminaries, to reward the patience with which I *ſtill* hoped ſhe would ſubmit to *my* injunctions."

"Well, you are an extraordinary man!" returned his ſiſter, "*ſo* much philoſophy, *ſo* much ſenſibility, *ſo* much the ſlave of philantropy, and yet *ſo* much the maſter of your reaſon! You have done well; I ſhould not, I am ſure, have done half ſo well. I know, from the eagerneſs that now ſprings up in my heart to embrace *your* favourite, that I muſt have opened my arms to have received her, had the application been made to *me* inſtead of yourſelf."

"I am glad then," ſaid he, "that we are now *all* likely to be ſatisfied, without any body being to blame; and in leſs than three weeks, I have no doubt, I ſhall be able to preſent her to you.

"And I have no doubt," ſhe rejoined, "I ſhall love her quite as much as you do.

This

This ſort of converſation, without fatiguing the two perſons who ſupported it, laſted till Mrs. St. Edmonds's repeater announced a quarter paſt eleven o'clock, an hour not much reſpected by faſhion, but friendly to invalids, in which claſs, we are ſorry to ſay, this very amiable woman had long been numbered. Mr. Curry tenderly ſupported her to the door of her chamber, then retired to his own; and the next morning before ſhe was ſtirring, again ſet off for the mart of buſineſs, leaving orders with the houſekeeper to inform his ſiſter, he ſhould return the following day in time for dinner.

It is ſometimes the caſe, that men who are *getting* or *ſpending* money, though equally eager in their diametrically oppoſite purſuit, will ſtart aſide from the *direct* road, whenever a temptation is held out, ſuppoſe it but in the ſhape of a feather, ſhould the feather chance to tickle his fancy. To ſupport which propoſition I ſhall bring forward two inſtances:—*Arthur Iſleworth* was ſtopped on *his* way to New-market, where it was ten to one he might have loſt more than he had *to* loſe, in leſs time than he took to indulge himſelf with the ſpectacle of two noted bruiſers, met to break each other's bones in cold blood, on a match of fifty guineas; and our good merchant, when arrived at his houſe in Bond-

Bond-ſtreet, was detained from *his* money-getting purſuits on the 'Change by a morning paper that lay on his table—he had not a moment to ſpare: Lady Iſleworth's name, in capital letters, made him forget that he had not a moment to ſpare, and he read as follows:

" Splendid preparations are making in Port-
" man-ſquare, by the ſupreme directreſs of ele-
" gance and faſhion, *Lady Iſleworth*, to cele-
" brate the marriage of her eldeſt ſon with the
" only daughter and heireſs of Lord Benvour.
" Her ladyſhip unites to the extremes of wit,
" perſonal charms, and various accompliſh-
" ments—a dower of ſuch magnitude as, it may
" be preſumed, will ſoon lift her fortunate huſ-
" band to a ſeat in the upper houſe. The
" writer of this article has the ſingular plea-
" ſure to add, that for expence, taſte, and beau-
" ty, in the ball to be given on this occaſion,
" Lady Iſleworth will find herſelf, as uſual, un-
" rivalled by all her competitors."

" Aſtoniſhing!" cried the exaſperated man " of buſineſs, " Aſtoniſhing folly! which vaunteth itſelf in the *very* face of poverty and contempt: This raſcally editor deſerves baſtinadoing! Such inflammatory paragraphs as theſe are more efficacious in corrupting the minds

minds of young women than *even* the example of their *own* mothers!" He thooght alſo of his *two* thouſand pounds, and calculated how far it was likely they would go to provide for Lady Iſleworth's jubilee. Again remembered he had not a moment to ſpare—he haſtened away to fulfil his engagements on 'Change.

CHAP. XIX.

STILL MORE CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE TITLE-PAGE.

WHEN laſt we parted from Sir Frederick Iſleworth, he was going with a giddy head and unſteady ſtep towards the carriage, which was to conduct him, if not to the devil, at leaſt into the very path which leads to his dominions.

The ruinous party had aſſembled before he joined them, yet he was *juſt* in time to undo himſelf. Faro being the game, his finances became ſo mangled between *great* and *little* figure,

gure, that, of fifteen hundred he carried out in the evening, he brought back in the morning no more than *one* ſingle guinea, manfully reſiſting the overtures of deſpair to ſtay and witneſs the funeral obſequies of that one *alſo*.

As he rolled along the ſilent ſtreets towards his comfortleſs home, not knowing what to do with *certain* reflections that threatened to be the companions of his ſhort drive, he reclined his aching head againſt the ſide of the chariot, in which poſition he and they all fell aſleep together. *Fancy*, a thouſand times more flattering than *reality*, began to make herſelf very buſy in repairing all that was amiſs in the affairs of this *great* man: ſhe rehearſed before him a ſcene very much calculated for his amuſement—it was the funeral proceſſion of his aunt Lady Bridget; and at the moment when a thundering rap at his own door forced the magic dame to drop the wand of her enchantments, her inactive victim was in poſſeſſion of thirty times the ſum he had left behind him at the gaming-houſe.

No more ſuch viſions gilded the downy pillow of repoſe, when, with an agitated mind and gloomy countenance, he ſought for them in his own apartment. The goddeſs of fiction, offended at the little reſpect he paid to her officious

cious zeal, would not enter any more into his ſervice; for, whilſt his valet diſrobed him, he vented curſes on *all* dreams as well as *dreamers*, amongſt which latter number he was not diſintereſted enough to forget himſelf. Without dwelling too long on one ſubject, we ſhall let Sir Frederick ſleep out his nap with what appetite he may, and, with gentle violence, force back the repentant Lord Clarence on the ſtage of action.

"It was a terrible ſolecism!" cried the Peer, when the next day he awakened to ſenſe and recollection, "I have certainly *done* myſelf *up* with Clariſſa for ever! What the devil ſhould give me ſuch an unconquerable *penchant* for ſhewing myſelf when drunk, to the very people in the world who I would wiſh to believe me *always* ſober! Well, the deed is done, and cannot be undone. I will go and take a peep into the eyes of my miſtreſs; and if I have offended paſt forgiveneſs, I turn my back on a family with which, Miſs Iſleworth excepted, I am not *very* deeply enamoured."

In this accommodating ſtate of mind, Lord Clarence ſhewed himſelf in Lady Iſleworth's breakfaſt-room, juſt as all the party had diſperſed

themſelves, to follow what beſt ſuited their inclinations, Lady Ann excepted, who was trying to find out a riddle in the Ladies Pocket-book, the ſolution of which had occaſioned ſome difficulties, when many heads as wiſe as her own were united to ſolve them. She remained alone to receive his lordſhip; and ſo artfully managed the opportunity of a *tête-à-tête*, that, by paſſing over the little irregularity of which he profeſſed himſelf guilty the preceding night, with more *nonchalence* than he thought, or in fact than it really did deſerve—*by* treating his foibles with indulgence, and *by* magnifying his pretenſions to applauſe, ſhe led him on to ſearch for thoſe *agrèements* in herſelf which, with the eyes of a lover, he had hitherto conſidered the ſole property of but *one* woman in the world, and that woman Clariſſa Iſleworth.

The more he looked and liſtened, the more he was confirmed that he had miſtaken the object, and that beauty, wit, taſte, and goodneſs, were all centered in the wife of her brother!—Of which truth he became ſo fully perſuaded, that on the entrance of his once adored miſtreſs, he paid his compliments with an air of indifference almoſt as frigid as her own.

Sir Frederick, though involved in his own perplexities, and Lady Iſleworth, though her head

was

was running round on the pivot of a thouſand ſplendid chimeras, neither of them could help obſerving one day, and many following ones, that Clariſſa loſt ground with the Earl, and that Lady Ann engroſſed the greater ſhare of his attention. Sir Frederick *ſaid* he would ſpeak to his daughter; Lady Iſleworth *talked* of haſtening her ball; *and* on this *one* point they were both agreed, *that* his lordſhip ſhould *not* ſlip through their fingers, if there was any poſſibility of holding him faſt. Each determined to purſue their own plan in their own way—Sir Frederick to *reaſon*, and his lady to *dance* the poor Clariſſa out of her *prejudices*, for to her ſhyneſs was placed the whole crime of her noble lover's deſertion.

"Child!" ſaid Sir Frederick, darting a ſtern and ſcrutinizing look on the bluſhing downcaſt countenance of his daughter, when ſhe obeyed the ſummons which brought her to his cloſet, "Child! I command you to tell me, without *prevarication*, what you have done to offend *my* friend Lord Clarence?"

"Me, papa! nothing in the world that I know of. Does his Lordſhip accuſe me of diſreſpect?"

"No, he does not *complain*; but it is *too* viſible to your mother and myſelf how *much* his behavi-

our is changed within the laſt week, and you *muſt* have been to blame!"

"Dear Sir, what is my fault? or what do you conceive it to be? Pray keep me not in ſuſpenſe, but *tell* me my errors, and I will *try* to amend them,"

"Your *errors*, indeed! it would be well if you had nothing worſe to account for."

"What then is my crime?"

"The crime of diſobedience! Know, ungrateful girl! that even in the *lifetime* of the late counteſs I had *fixed* my mind on *your* ſucceeding to *that* ſtation of honor; and, ſince her death, will you *pretend* not to have taken notice with what *anxiety* I have been *labouring* to bring about this great event? Do you forget, alſo, with what avidity my Lord was running into *my* toils, before *your* damned airs of ſcornful prudery drove him back, and diſtanced all my views for your eſtabliſhment? Theſe airs, Madam, *you* are pleaſed to call *errors*; I call them ſins! capital ſins againſt common ſenſe, againſt *my* intereſt, and againſt your *own*. Therefore, I command you to get rid of them as faſt you can, and reform your manners, or, by———," and he ſwore a tremendous

oath

oath—"if I am obliged to look out for another huſband for you, it ſhall not be a young handſome man like Clarence, but I will *force* you into the arms of any old fellow who can ſerve my purpoſe, though one half of his limbs ſhould be torn from the weather-beaten trunk, and the other half in a ſtate of diſlocation, No anſwering—no anſwering!" continued he, raiſing his voice, as he ſaw her trying to collect a reply from amongſt her ideas, which his violence had unſparingly ſcattered, "I will hear nothing that you can ſay in your defence. I tell you again, you *muſt* have affronted Lord Clarence: ſo go and dreſs to the beſt advantange—*look* tenderly on him—*act* like the reſt of your ſex—*flirt* with him—lay our new lures to catch his attention—do *any* thing to revive his affection—or dread a father's diſpleaſure."

He turned upon his heel, ſlapped the door after him, and left his daughter, not the more in love with Lord Clarence for the ſentence ſhe had received at the parental bar of judgment.

CHAP

CHAP. XX.

WAYS AND MEANS.

DELIGHTED with his newly adopted ſyſtem of terror, extremely flattering in promiſe, Sir Frederick left his daughter, and went to ſeek for his wife, whom he knew he ſhould find at the board of green cloth, amuſing Arthur's bride with a little *chicken* picquet, to paſs away an idle hour before an dreſſing time.

Lady Ann had juſt ran off to her chamber in a pretended pet with her bad luck, though, by her own account, her loſſes were only twenty, and by that of her antagoniſt no more than ten ſhillings.

Lady Iſleworth was employing the few remaining ſolitary moments in telling her own fortune on the cards; ſhe had cut them three times—wiſhed Lord Clarence might *ſpeak out* on the night he was to be the partner of Clariſſa at her ball—and the nine of hearts, unerring prognoſtic of ſucceſs, had actually made its appearance, when the entrance of Sir Frederick called

led from her this extatic exclamation.—"I have got my wiſh, and Miſs Iſleworth will ſoon be Counteſs of Clarence!"

"Has my Lord," cried her huſband, "told "you ſo?"

"Oh no! but here is the *nine of hearts*, and ſee by what enchanting cards it is every way ſurrounded!"

Inſtead of reproving his wife's folly, he gave a new ſpecimen of his own, by ſuppoſing ſhe would allow his ſuperiority in planning, when he ſhould have unfolded to her incurious inattentive ear what had juſt been paſſing between myſelf and his daughter.

Lady Iſleworth thought of nothing but the critical ball—it muſt be haſtened—*that* alone could or would ever bring back the retreating lover—dancing expoſed a thouſand charms, which would otherwiſe lie concealed, or at leaſt only peep out from behind a veil of aukward reſerve to *very* little advantage. And it was thus ſhe reaſoned.

"In the name of nature! my dear, is there a man in the world who can preſerve his ſtoiciſm

ciſm when aſſailed by an hoſt of temptations? The touch of a ſoft hand—the glance of an eye—the bluſh of exerciſe—the graces of attitude—all, all, every thing, I do *inſiſt* upon it, is in favour of the ball! You cannot diſpute it, Sir Frederick!"

At any other time, when he had not wanted her aſſiſtance to raiſe the needful, Sir Frederick would moſt ſurely have diſputed, but now it became him to be paſſive, until ſhe began very ſeverely to reprehend him for having treated Clariſſa with rigour, "when you know," ſaid ſhe "how much the beauty of her countenance depends on the quantity of animation ſhe may be able to throw into it; and now, ſince you have talked to her ſo ſeriouſly, I ſuppoſe ſhe muſt be transformed into a perfect Melpomene, or at beſt a red-eyed Magdalen. However, all may not yet be loſt—I ſhall try, by my indulgence, to reſtore what you have taken from her."

Sir Frederick, rouſed to reſentment by theſe illiberal reflections on his underſtanding, perſiſted that his meaſures were the beſt. A warm debate enſued; in the very paroxiſm of which her ladyſhip demanded an *immediate* and large ſupply of cash, that all due *force* might be given to *her* experiment: which demand, ſo far from building up the breach which a difference of opinion

opinion had made between them, was anſwered only by a *poſitive* refuſal of compliance, leaving the ſtate of their *tempers* in almoſt as ruinous a condition as their *circumſtances;* nor was it till her ladyſhip had vented in tears and ſobs, the moſt troubleſome particles of her paſſion, that ſhe was capable of deviſing new *ways* and *new* means to evade the conſequences of a diſappointment which threatened to deſtroy the whole of her air built fabrick—for *without* money there could be no *ball*, and *without* a ball, ſhe was equally convinced there could be no *poſſible* way of fixing Lord Clarence.

In this diſconſolate humour ſhe went to her dreſſing-room—ſhut the door—threw herſelf down on a rich ſofa—and wept bitterly.

On this ſame luckleſs morning her ladyſhip received from Staffordſhire two letters; one from a former governeſs to her children, who, having married a curate, afterwards ſettled in that county, to whom Lady Iſleworth, eighteen months before, ſent her ſecond and third daughters, both verging on womanhood—not ſo much for inſtruction in the whole *duties* of *woman*—not ſo much with the deſign of conveying cultivation to thoſe female accompliſhments which, ſome how or other, had been altogether totally

neglected—as becauſe, according to her maternal reaſoning, and in conformity to the preſent cuſtom, it was thought beſt to keep them out of harm's way till their eldeſt ſiſter had made her market. How convenient—how conſiſtent theſe plans, for the race of exiſting mothers to adopt! What if ſo many charming daughters, all produced on the ſtage of life in the ſame ſcene, ſhould not interfere with their own claims to admiration, yet, may they not croſs the path of each other's preferment? It is the part of prudent matrons to prevent ſuch misfortunes; and I ſuppoſe it to be for this very reaſon we ſo often ſee one of the long brood flying about the world at her own diſcretion, and hear of half a dozen more, equally capable of the ſame womanly excurſions, who are locked up in their nurſeries.

Having introduced the writer of one letter, it is only to be added, that the other came from the pen of Miſs Arabella, her ladyſhip's ſecond daughter, who had juſt entered into the nineteenth year of her confinement. Let us ſee, then, if there is to be found, in the contents of either or both of theſe epiſtles, any thing to exonerate Lady Iſleworth from the charge of being, like too many of her *ſex* and *kind*, put

out

out of humour by trifles even lighter than themſelves.

" Honored Madam,

" I think it my duty to inform your Lady-
" ſhip, that the young ladies are in want of
" many things they cannot do without, particu-
" larly ſhoes, ſtockings, and petticoats, beſides
" linen of *all* ſorts: and as to Miſs Matilda, ſhe
" has outgrown all her frocks, ſo that they are
" quite above her knees—two of them only are
" in tolerable repair, the reſt, I aſſure your La-
" dyſhip, are not fit to be ſeen; ſo that if I
" am to be honored with the company of the la-
" dies *much* longer, I hope your Ladyſhip will
" take it into your conſideration to order them
" new cloaths of every ſort.

" I hope alſo that your Ladyſhip will forgive
" our officiouſneſs, for my huſband and I have
" procured them a writing-maſter, to attend
" ever ſince they have been in the country: to
" be ſure your Ladyſhip did not *ſay* that it
" ſhould be ſo; but then *we* thought it a pity,
" as Miſs Arabella had got into joinhand before
" ſhe came to us, that ſhe ſhould forget all that
" had been taught her, for want of practice.

" There

" There are now fifteen pounds due for their " teaching; which money Mr. Standiſh would " be very proud to receive from your Ladyſhip, " as he has a ſickly wife, and ſeven ſmall chil- " dren. I wiſh it had been in our power to have " paid him without troubling your Ladyſhip; " but my *poor* huſband, though he ſerves " two churches, and rides like a poſt-boy from " one to the other every Sunday, yet his labours " on horſeback and in the pulpit produce him " no more than ſeventy pounds a year; which " is all we have in the world, except my for- " mer *wages*, which are in your Ladyſhip's " hands, as well as the hundred and twenty " pounds that you agreed to pay us for the " board of the young ladies, at the rate of forty " pounds a year for each of them.

" We have now had the happineſs of their " good company eighteen months; and my *poor* " Mr. Trotter, who is more puzzled in mak- " ing both ends than in compoſing a hundred " ſermons, all fit to be preached before the bi- " ſhop, (for indeed his learning is much great- " er than his profit); for theſe reaſons, my La- " dy, poor Mr. Trotter would hold himſelf ever- " laſtingly obliged to your Ladyſhip's goodneſs " for the whole, or any part of the debt due to " him: the butcher and baker have not ſeen the

" colour

" colour of *his* money ſince Michaelmas; ſo
" that their bills muſt be much longer than our
" purſes, if your Ladyſhip's kindneſs does not
" help us out.

" The young ladies have very charming ap-
" petites, and much good may it do them.

" There is a trifle, my Lady, that I did not
" wiſh to communicate, for fear it might vex
" your Ladyſhip; but Mr. Trotter will have
" it, that it is his *duty* and mine to let your La-
" dyſhip into *every* thing, that worſe may not
" happen; for, to be ſure, as he ſays, it would
" be no deſirable match between the daughter
" of a baronet and the ſon of a farmer.

" You muſt know then, my Lady, ſince it
" *muſt* come out, that Miſs Matilda has, for ſe-
" veral weeks, been in an oddiſh melancholy
" ſort of a way; her chearfulneſs (for ſhe uſed
" to be as merry as a bee) all of a ſudden went
" off, God knows how! and Mr. Trotter obſer-
" ved, that it was likely ſhe might fall into a
" conſumption, as ſhe had got a habit of ſigh-
" ing, God knows for what!

" At laſt Mr. Trotter, who has more pene-
" tration than moſt parſons, threw out ſome
" hints

" hints to me in confidence, as if he thought " Miſs Matilda had fallen in love with ſome bo- " dy or other; upon which we began to think " of all the young gentlemen who came to " church, or called in at the parſonage: and at " firſt we ſuſpected it to be Mr. Ramble, our " attorney's clerk, becauſe all ladies think him " very handſome; but I ſaid, on ſecond thoughts, " I did not ſuppoſe it could be him, for that " Miſs Arabella ſeemed to delight in his compa- " ny much more than her ſiſter. " Well then," " ſaid Mr. Trotter, for he hit it off in a mo- " ment, " I will be hanged if ſhe has not a kind- " neſs for young Ruſſell, whoſe father rents the " great tithes of the vicar."

" I wonder I had not thought of him myſelf; " for now I remembered he was a more comely " youth than Mr. Ramble, of the ſame age with " Miſs Matilda, and that ſhe was mighty fond " of hearing him play upon the flute. Mr. " Trotter told me he would watch them better " in future; and yeſterday, my Lady, he ſurpri- " ſed them walking together, with Mr. Ruſſell's " arm thrown about Miſs Matilda's waiſt. " They did not know that any body had ſeen " them: ſo, if your Ladyſhip pleaſes, we ſhould " be glad not to have *our* names mentioned as " informers, for the young lady would never

" forgive

" forgive us; beſides, the Ruſſels are people of
" ſubſtance, and our very good neighbours. I
" remember to have often heard your Ladyſhip
" declare, that time was more precious to you
" than any thing elſe: ſo, begging your pardon
" for having taken up ſo much of it, I remain,
" my Lady, your Ladyſhip's moſt humble and
" dutiful ſervant,

" ALICE TROTTER."

And what were the emotions that agitated the maternal boſom of Lady Illeworth, on being pretty plainly informed that both her daughters were naked—one of them in love, to a *certainty*, with the farmer's ſon—and the other *apparently* ready to form a ſimilar attachment with the attorney's clerk?

Why, ſhe betrayed no emotions at *all*, her thoughts being otherwiſe employed; and looking in the glaſs, juſt as ſhe had careleſſly caſt her eyes over Mr. Trotter's morſel of eloquence ſhe ſaw her woman miſplacing her cap, when every thing ſhe poſſeſſed of *feeling* was exerted in the reprimands ſhe beſtowed on Harris for her aukwardneſs, and in diſpoſing the ornament to greater advantage.

The alteration being effected to her entire approbation, her temper returned in its uſual placidity

placidity, when, leaving the governeſs's letter open on the toilet, ſhe proceeded to examine the other, which, being from her daughter, was not the firſt to make a claim on her attention.

The only notice taken of Mrs. Trotter's expoſtulation, or information, was muttering ſomething about *impertinence* in aſking for *cloaths*, when the children were confined in a country place, where they could ſee *nobody*—beſides calling the curate and his wife a couple of fools, for troubling *her* with *their* wiſe obſervations on a boy and girl's playful rambles through the fields together,

Miſs Arabella's writing or orthography were neither of them the *moſt* perfect of their *kind*; yet Lady Iſleworth ſo rapturouſly admired the ſpirited compoſition, that ſhe ſeveral times broke out into ſhort plaudits, ſuch as—charming!—how animated!—another ſelf! Then laughing very heartily, ſhe afterwards read aloud the entertaining epiſtle with which ſhe was ſo highly diverted, to convince her attendant that the mirth it excited was natural, willing to juſtify the *effect* by making her a ſharer in the *cauſe*.

Condeſcenſions of this ſort were not very unfrequent, and Harris liſtened with her uſual avidity

dity, declaring it was *vaſtly* fine, *vaſtly* witty, *vaſtly* clever indeed! and ſhould have wondered how *ſo* young a lady could put ſuch things together, if *genius* had not run in the *blood* of the family, *particularly* on the ſide of her ladyſhip.

A compliment ſo aptly conceived met with a gracious welcome, as will, I hope, the bright occaſion from whence it originated: but, whilſt laying this extraordinary letter before my readers, if mothers, let me caution them not to think leſs favourable of their own nurſelings, though they ſhould not come near the ſtand of Miſs Bell's literary accompliſhments; let them firſt conſider what pretenſions they have to expect prodigies in their female iſſue? *Rare ripes* are not always the produce of attention; *ſuch* fruit has its ſeed more generally in *nature*, though it may be forced by education. Let us proceed to the ſpecimen.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

NURSERY WIT IN A YOUNG LADY OF NINETEEN.

" DEAR MAMA,

" MATILDA and I think it very odd that we " ſhould be kept here in this naſty, dirty, ſtupid " place, till we are grown almoſt over the hedges, and nearly as tall as the chimnies belonging to the hut of prim parſon Trotter.

" Indeed it is quite ſhocking! What does it " ſignify to be women, and pretty women too, if " we are for ever to be made obedient to the laws " of reſtraint?—to be treated like mere babies! " —to put our hands before us, curteſying every " time we come in or go out of the room, with " a *Miſs* you *muſt* not do *this*, that, and the other! " You never ſaw any thing, mama, half ſo tormenting in all your life!

" I am ſure, for my part, I would be glad to " exchange ſituations with Harris; for then I " ſhould have the pleaſure of looking at you, " when I had made you as fine as a queen; and

" afterwards,

"afterwards, when I could ſee you no longer, nor "be entertained by peeping out at the window to "watch all the coaches and chairs that ſtop at "your door, how delighted I ſhould be in tum-"bling over all your charming new things, and "inſtructing myſelf in the lateſt faſhions!

"Inſtead of theſe *diverſions*, we are condem-"ned, from morning till night, to the drudgery "of working, or reading, or hearing lectures; for "though the parſon preaches four times on a "Sunday, yet he does not think that enough, but "makes ſhift to ſnuffle out every day a ſort of ſer-"mon, for our private edification; which there "would be no bearing, if Matilda and I did not "contrive to cheat the old gentleman, by falling "aſleep in the midſt of his palavering; then we "are made to kneel down, night and morning, to "ſay *family* prayers, in a hole of a parlour not ſo "large as your dinner table, where, to increaſe "our inconveniencies, a great ſtaring vulgar "maid-ſervant makes one of the party—ſo that "when we are all down I actually have not room "to move my elbows, and if they ſhould grow to "my ſides it will be no wonder. Oh! dear "mama, only think of our condition!

"Our governeſs, I believe, does not like theſe "ſort of things any more than *we* do; but that "does

" does *us* no good, becauſe the fright of a parſon " always will have his own way. She once did " go *ſo* far as to *inſiſt*, that having Martha in to " prayers with Sir Frederick Iſleworth's *daughters* " was mixing them with very *improper* company. " And what do you think, mama, was his inſo- " lent anſwer? Truly, he ſaid, " whatever *ſhe* " might take into *her* head about diſtinctions, in " performing our *duties* to God *one* perſon was as " acceptable as *another*." Did you ever hear of " ſuch a poor, ignorant, ill-bred ſavage, not to " know the difference of *rank*, and rudely to " affront one, by ſaying to one's face one is no " better than his dirty drab of a ſervant!

" Oh, dear!—Oh, dear! what a happy crea- " ture is Clariſſa! going about every where— " making conqueſts every day—courted by every " body—flattered by every body—and, as you " tell me, mama, juſt going to be married, to " have a *coronet* on her coach, and to do whate- " ver ſhe pleaſes!

" Now, for my part, mama, I do not want to " be married *immediately*, but I do very much " wiſh you would ſend for us home, that we may " be bride maids. Mrs. Trotter gives me ſome " comfort, by ſaying it is very likely you will " have us to be preſent at the ceremony, and that

" witneſſing

" witneſſing Clary's wedding may be a ſtep to-
" wards our own.

" Dear, ſweet mama! pray take compaſſion
" on the drearineſs of our diſmal priſon, or pre-
" pare to hear we have hung ourſelves in ſpite
" and vexation! Upon my word, that might
" have been our fate long ago, if, amongſt the
" ruſtics which form our *monſtrous* ſociety, there
" had not been two families, a *little* better than
" the reſt—one an attorney, the other a ſort of
" farmering gentleman.

" We are all fond of muſic to diſtraction; and
" the *young* folks that belong to the *old* ones,
" doing what they can to keep us alive, we have
" hitherto been prevented from an act of deſpera-
" tion which your cruelty, dear mama, will not
" fail to compleat. Therefore, pray ſend your
" carriage for us, or order us to come to town
" in the ſtage *immediately*: nay, if you chuſe that
" I ſhould take the journey on foot, *even* with-
" out ſhoes, I ſhall joyfully ſet out on the pilgri-
" mage, and cripple onward as faſt as I can, to
" prove how much, dear mama, I am your obe-
" dient and dutiful daughter,

" ISABELLA ISLEWORTH."

Whatever pleaſantry the peruſal of this witty compoſition had at firſt created in the ideas of Lady

Lady Iſleworth, was wholly diſperſed in her ſucceeding interview with Sir Frederick—ſo intirely diſſipated, that, after having flown from the ſight of her barbarous *tyrant*, it was a very long time before ſhe could rally her ſcattered ſpirits to any ſettled point of contrivance. Now, all *good* financiers well *know*, that the *head* ſhould be *cold*, and the *thoughts* collected, *when* a national *or* private debt *muſt* be contracted, *for which* the miniſter, the man, or the woman, has no ſecurity to offer.

Reduced to this terrible dilemma, unknowing what to do, which way to turn, or where to look for redreſs, her diſtracted ladyſhip ſent down word to her hardly leſs deranged family, that, being ſuddenly indiſpoſed, they muſt ſit down to dinner without her.

This meſſage alarmed none of the party except Clariſſa, who immediately ran up to enquire what was the matter. She tried the door—it was locked; ſhe aſked admittance, but was refuſed entrance, with an authoritive command that ſhe ſhould directly return to the company, and not teaze a poor invalid with inſignificant queſtions.—Miſs Iſleworth reluctantly obeyed.

"Well, child, what ails mama?" whiſpered Lady Ann, ſeeing Clariſſa return ſo ſoon, "are we

we going to have a little brother or ſiſter palmed upon us? or is it only a fit of the vapours?"

"I have not ſeen my mother," replied Miſs Iſleworth, "ſhe is diſpoſed to reſt, and I would not diſturb her."

"Oh! you dear little *prude!*" ſaid her gay ladyſhip, "this caution is even more indefenſible than your *ſtep* by *ſtep* advances to poor Clarence."

She ſtill ſpoke in a low tone, but not *ſo* low as to prevent his Lordſhip now always ſtationary at her elbow, from hearing himſelf named; and, catching hold of her hand with lover-like gallantry, he ſwore it ſhould be his priſoner, till he knew how far *he* was concerned in the ſecret carrying on between her and Miſs Iſleworth.

"Shall I tell him?" cried Lady Ann, laughing.

"For your *own* ſake, I ſhould hope *not*," replied Clariſſa, whoſe complexion had before diſplayed, on its pure white, the crimſon flag of diſpleaſure, and, riſing from her ſeat, ſhe retired to another part of the room, where her father was

was amuſing himſelf with a book on calculation, chances, and odds.

Lady Iſleworth found her conquered ſpirits, conſiderably reinforced, after eating half a boiled chicken, and drinking three glaſſes of Madeira. It happened, whilſt thus employed, that a lucky expedient croſſed her labouring brain—vanity gave it birth, and neceſſity nurtured it:—thus it was brought about.

She could not remember ever before to have ſhed a ſufficient number of tears at one time, to convince herſelf whether the poet's obſervation, that they are becoming to beauty, extended to her own particular caſt of features. To juſtify her curioſity on this head, ſhe threw her ſtreaming eyes on the dreſſing-glaſs, a monitor more *faithful* than *flattering*; ſhe was diſguſted with the truths it uttered—ſhe ſtarted at the blotted countenance it preſented—but more at the inroads which ſorrow liquidated had made on the artificial bloom of her complexion.

The rouge was at hand—ſhe haſtily repaired the damage her cheeks had ſuſtained—baniſhed care from her mind—and invited ſmiles to her face, crying out, "How abſurd! Can the foe of animation be the friend of beauty?"

A few

A few falſe gems that ſparkled on her boſom next attracted her attention: "Ah!" exclaimed ſhe, "had I but the *ſubſtance* in *my own* poſſeſſion of theſe paltry ſhadows, I might ſtill be happy!" It was then that the lucky thought occurred how ſhe might get at the originals, and to what a charming uſe ſhe might convert them.

Having digeſted the whole plan, and re-aſſumed her uſual gaiety, Lady Iſleworth deſcended from her dreſſing-room; and, when ſhe joined the feſtive circle below, was quite as good company as if nothing had happened to diſturb her; nor could the niceſt obſerver have diſtinguiſhed any leading features of gloom, diſcontent, or reſentment, by which to have traced her late *fracas* with Sir Frederick.

CHAP. XXII.

VEXATION ON VEXATION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the total privation of money, every thing went on as ſwimmingly

mingly in Portman-ſquare as if the treaſury itſelf had been opened to ſupply the wants and wiſhes of Lady Iſleworth, who, at an enormous expence, contrived, by filling her houſe with dinner and ſupper parties, to make Lady Ann's confinement at home leſs inſupportable, Sir Frederick having declared it againſt all *etiquette*, that his daughter-in-law ſhould exhibit *en bride*, until Lord Benvour had ſanctified her haſty nuptials, to which event he looked forward with the moſt ſanguine expectation; for, in defiance of their former quarrel on the ſubject of this union, when only in the embryo, he had himſelf condeſcended to mediate between the *offended* and *offenders*; nor did his Lordſhip's ſilence to a very laboured epiſtle in the leaſt diſcourage his hopes of a ſpeedy reconciliation.

Already had Arthur Iſleworth been abſent from town ten days, and no body ſeemed to regret his deſertion leſs than Lady Ann herſelf. "What does it ſignify?" ſhe would ſay, "Am I *not* married to the man? So whether he is here or there, he *muſt* drag his chain after him."

Lady Iſleworth adored her ſpirit, but Sir Frederick called it levity. Perhaps this appellation proceeded from the humour of the moment; for at the moment it eſcaped him various cauſes had combined

combined to make him ſee people and things through the medium of fretfulneſs. His agreeable friend, Mrs. Snug, had *that* morning eloped with a younger man than himſelf: on *that* morning the member of a body corporate, by whoſe *influence* or *avarice* he had obtained a ſeat in Parliament ſeven years before, came to him, with the mortifying tidings that a weighty opponent was already in the field, and ſhowering gold, like duſt, upon the palms of his conſtituents—obſerving, that there was no other method of ſtopping the progreſs of this new candidate, than by out-doing him in his own way; and concluded with a hint, that a brace of thouſands, conveyed, through him, to his brethren of the corporation, might inſure his intereſt. But, had it inſured his ſalvation, Sir Frederick could not have raiſed the *fine* demanded; no, nor the twentieth part, if one hundred only would have ſaved him from perdition. He had therefore nothing to give the greedy meſſenger but *good* words, and nothing to ſend by him to his brethren but *fair* promiſes!—a mighty old-faſhioned coin, which, in the preſent age of trifles, loſes all pretenſions to currency.

Beſides theſe ſources of vexation, another cauſe had preſented itſelf on the ſame morning, which filled the Baronet's mind with more in-

flammable matter than all the reſt of his croſſes; it was a ſhort anſwer to a long letter, couched in the following terms.

" SIR,

" I congratulate you and your family on your " alliance to the noble houſe of Benvour; and " hope the *honor* you may derive from the con- " nection will compenſate for the inconveni- " ence of being encumbered with an unma- " nageable, unportioned young woman of qua- " lity. *Your* ſon has robbed *me* of what I can " very well ſpare, *an* undutiful daughter. I " ſend then neither my bleſſing nor my curſe; " but mark me, Sir Frederick, I give *you* this " irrevocable aſſurance, *that* if a guinea might " ſave your whole race from deſtruction I would " *not* advance it—by my life! nor bequeath it " at my death. To-morrow I enter into a " ſecond engagement, from which I hope to have " children more deſerving of my love than La- " dy Ann Iſleworth. For the laſt time, I have " the honour to ſubſcribe myſelf,

" Sir,

" Your obedient ſervant,

" BENVOUR."

This letter, with many others, had lain ſome hours on the breakfaſt table, before the family aſſembled themſelves together. Lady Ann toſ-

ſed

ſed them over one by one, and at laſt came to that which, by the ſuperſcription, ſhe knew to be her father's, though, whether intended as a mark of contempt, or proceeding from accident, he had not ſtamped the envelope either with his name or his coronet.

"Ho, ho!" cried ſhe, "this comes from my Lord Huffy Gruffy, and no doubt contains an earthquake that will blow us all into the third heaven."

"Is my Lord any relation of your Ladyſhip's?" aſked her mother in-law; for Sir Frederick had not yet made his appearance, being ſhut up in another room with his friend the Alderman.

This queſtion had ſuch an effect on the riſible faculties of Lady Ann, that, in a fit of laughter, next to convulſive, ſhe ſhouted out, "Dear Madam! is it poſſible that you ſhould not underſtand Huffy Gruffy and Lord Benvour are one and the ſame perſon?"

Lady Iſleworth broke out into raptures at the explanation, declaring her a firſt-rate *belle eſprit*; and that whether Lord Huffy Gruffy might be kind or cruel, her ſon Arthur would be ſufficiently

ently rich in a wife *ſo* highly accompliſhed, and his family but *too* happy in being allied to *her* graces and *her* talents. "Indeed," added ſhe, "I with almoſt his lordſhip may hold back his pardon for a little time, juſt to give us *all* an opportunity of ſhewing our perfect and diſintereſted gratitude."

"Well; but my dear Lady Iſleworth," replied the wife of Arthur, who ſat twiſting her father's letter into every ſort of form, to get at the contents, "ſuppoſe, as we are now all *one* family, and Sir Frederick not preſent, do you think he would be *very* angry if I ſhould break the ſeal, merely to take a *peep* at *my* papa? for, to tell you the truth, I am really dying with impatience."

"Oh, to be ſure!" was the giggling reply, "it is downright impoſſible he ſhould chide your *amiable* curioſity." Clariſſa, on the contrary, uſed a few unſucceſsful arguments, why ſhe ought to ſuſpend her inclination a little longer, offering to go and ſeek for her father.

"No, no; ſit ſtill, child," ſaid her mother, nor *preſume* to check the wiſhes of your all-charming ſiſter!"

"I would

"I would bet this magic bauble," cried Lady Ann, twirling her wedding-ring on the table, "*ſhe* would not do what I am going to do for the whole univerſe—open a letter not directed to herſelf," and, as ſhe ſpoke, applied her fingers to the ſeal; but, before it divided, Sir Frederick ſhewed himſelf. "Huſh!" ſhe exclaimed, "not a word about my *wicked* intentions." She then preſented it to him, with the wax unbroken—told him from whence it came—and intreated that he would inſtantly read it aloud, for the edification of *all* whom it might concern.

Her Ladyſhip thus gave him the hardeſt taſk he had ever been employed to execute, ſo buſy were his hopes and fears in filling up his harraſſed mind with all the rubbiſh of deſperate anxieties. *Should* the Peer be propitious, his ſon, his fortune, his pending election, *all* would do well; but *vice verſa*, and his fine proſpects muſt fall to the ground—his ſon is ruined, his fortune ſpent, and his election loſt! Is it then a matter of wonder that, as he haſtily ſwallowed Lord Benvour's ſavoury meſs of poiſon, the very ratſbane of his better expectations, his nerves, his ſight, his ſpeech ſhould be affected—that his hands ſhould tremble, his eye balls ſtart, and his tongue faulter—or that, throwing the

the letter from him, he ſhould bounce out of the room with quivering lips, and ſuppreſſed execrations?

"Why, what is the matter now?" cried Lady Ann, "Sir Frederick ſeems *prodigiouſly* diſſatisfied! I am confident my father is *much* meeker than I could ſuppoſe *poſſible*."

"Oh! never mind *Sir Frederick*," replied his lady, "we ſhall all do mighty well *by* and *bye*:—but, my dear, I hope you have prepared a bridal dreſs for your appearance on Thurſday?"

"Now would I give any thing in the world, *but* my youth and my beauty," ſaid Lady Ann, "to know who it will be."

"Of what are you thinking?" aſked Lady Iſleworth; "perhaps of the happy man who will be honored with your fair hand on Thurſday?"

"Nothing about it," ſhe replied; "ſo far from thinking of a partner for myſelf, I can only gueſs—gueſs—gueſs, and all to no purpoſe, who *can* be the *maiden* or the *widow* that conſents,

ſents, at ſuch *ſhort* notice, to lead up the matrimonial dance with my *hobbling* papa?"

"Come, come, be more ſerious, my little giddy friend," ſaid the *ſage* matron, "his lordſhip only *threatens*, depend on it; he will never *do* ſo *ſilly* an action. I beg you will think no more of it, but anſwer me *ſoberly*.

"Have you choſe your colour and your ornaments? for I have told Sir Frederick that *no* power *upon* earth ſhall make me put off *my* ball."

"Dear Madam," returned Lady Ann, ſhrugging her ſhoulders, "how ſhould I chuſe *ſilks* or *ornaments?* Why, don't you know I have not a guinea in the world? Arthur has taken all the contents of my purſe to Newmarket, from whence I expect but a doomſday account of either my *man* or my *money?*"

"I beg your pardon," cried the mother of *that* man, "I ſhall ſend *my* people of buſineſs for your Ladyſhip's *orders*, and muſt hold myſelf for ever diſobliged ſhould you ſpare *any* ſort of expence, ſuited to the daughter of Lord Benvour and the wife of Mr. Iſleworth."

Whilſt Lady Ann returned thanks for this *very* broad commiſſion, to derange, if *poſſible*, the family affairs more than they were deranged *before*, ſhe ſaw, from the window, Lord Clarence, indolently ſtrolling down the ſquare; her hat was on—ſhe invited Clariſſa to go out with her, *that* they might *ſeize* on him before he entered the houſe, and make him walk with them in the garden. Miſs Iſleworth would have diſregarded Lady Ann's invitation; but a look from her mother, indicating that her diſpleaſure would be the conſequence of a refuſal, made her comply with the unpleaſant requiſition.

CHAP. XXIII.

FASHIONABLE INVOLVEMENTS COTRASTED WITH CHEAP LIVING.

LADY ISLEWORTH was, in reality, more hurt than ſhe appeared to be, when Sir Frederick withdrew ſo abruptly from the breakfaſt table, not that ſhe *very* much concerned herſelf

ſelf about the *occaſion* of his diſpleaſure, but, having, brought him into good humour, ſhe did not like to ſee him re-diſcompoſed, having always before her eyes the fear that he might relapſe into a fit of obſtinacy, become unmanageable, and force her to relinquiſh the *ball*, now within eight days of completion;—cruel misfortune! the more to be apprehended, becauſe ſhe thought it probable, though extremely ſilly, that he might conceive it *too* great a compliment paid to Lord *Benvour*, if they ſhould make any *extraordinary* parade on account of *his* daughter. "Heaven help me!" cried ſhe, "if he ſhould take ſuch a crotchet into his head, poſitively we are all undone!" and away ſhe tripped, to prevent, if poſſible, the threatened danger.

She found the *dreaded* maſter of *her* revels in his ſtudy: he was neither reading nor writing, but ſtretched upon his back at full length, on three ſtools, which, for the greater bodily eaſe, he had formed into a ſort of ſofa—his tortured mind rolling in agony, for which there could be invented no poſture of repoſe—his eyes were cloſed—his clenched hands reſted on his forehead—and, as ſhe entered the room, a groan ſaluted her ears, which might have been ſuppoſed to come from a diſconſolate malefactor when taking his

his laſt view of the world, followed by an exclamation ſo furious, as greatly terrified, and had nearly driven her back, without endeavouring to eſtabliſh her purpoſe; but it was *too* late—he heard the door open, and demanded who was there?

"It is only *me*," ſaid his lady, gaining courage. "What, in the name of wonder! Sir Frederick, could make you frighten *poor* Lady Ann, by flying from us in *ſuch* an *unaccountable* manner?"

"*Poor* Lady Ann!" he retorted, lifting himſelf a little up, and reſting on his elbow, "*poor* indeed!—damn'd *poor!* Arthur has made a fine hand of it!"

"Piſh! *you* love to look on the dark-complexioned ſide of *every* thing: I wiſh, like *me*, you would think that *all* happens for the beſt."

"And I wiſh, *Madam*, you would explain how it *can* be for the beſt, that *I* and *my* family ſhould be beggared to maintain the *coquettiſh* daughter of——"

"Hold! my dear," cried her ladyſhip, "on *this* ſcore I *muſt* beg leave to interrupt you: Lady

dy Ann is, *without* diſpute, the *moſt* elegant, *moſt* polite, *moſt* accompliſhed woman that *you* or *I* have ſeen on the town ſince we were firſt married."

Lady Iſleworth did not always ſpeak after a pattern; and ſhe here made uſe of a phraſe ſeldom coupled with *nobility*. Sir Frederick caught it up with ill-natured ſpitefulneſs, and replied, "I never heard that ſhe had been *on the town*, but her *talents* and her *poverty* may bring her *there* at laſt, and not a *curſe* ſhall I care;—let *Arthur* look to *that*."

"But why—why Sir Frederick will you put yourſelf out of temper for *trifles*? I do proteſt I have the *higeſt* opinion of Lady Ann; I am *ſure* that ſhe will rank with the very firſt of *faſhionable* wives; and Arthur may be the *happieſt* of huſbands, if it is not his *own* fault."

"Then," replied he, ſneeringly, "your *hopeful* offspring muſt be of the camelion breed; for, if he cannot live upon air, he muſt be as miſerable a dog as his father. Harkye, Madam!—if *I* loſe *my* election, as it is ten to one that I ſhall, having no means left to ſecure it, my *next* ſtep muſt be to the Bench."

"God

"God forbid!" cried her ladyſhip, giving her voice the tone of alarm, whilſt her face and her ſmiles retained all their charming ſtore of *nonchaleuce*, "If you would be but a *little* more reaſonable, I *could* open *ſuch* proſpects to *your* view as would make you laugh at your own *hyſterical* fancies."

"Could any thing excite me to mirth, it would be your folly, my dear. What, pray, is the *raree ſhow* your *ingenuity* has prepared to cheat *me* out of my *ſenſes?* Take care not to awaken my *ſtarved* hopes, unleſs you have ſolid food to give them when they *are* rouſed."

"Well, and ſo I have:—there is *my* ball!—you know it is only four days to my ball!"

"My Lady Iſleworth! do you call this *ſolid* comfort?"

"Undoubtedly! for, if you are not diſpoſed to be pleaſed with the ball *itſelf*, yet the conſequences!—the *conſequences*, my dear, *muſt* delight you!"

"As how!" ſaid the Baronet, ſtarting on his feet, and running to the window, to look after two handſome horſes, led by two grooms round the ſquare. "Curſe the ſcoundrels!—I will ſend them

them to the devil, for walking theſe creatures out of their ſtable before the ſweat can have taken effect!" He rung the bell furiouſly—gave orders about his horſes, as if his mind was engaged on *no* other ſubject—and then aſking his lady, who had not ceaſed ſpeaking, why ſhe did not proceed?

"I have been talking without being heard You was ſo engroſſed, my dear, with your grooms and your horſes, that you have *not* attended to what I was ſaying about my Lord Clarence and Clariſſa.

"Do you really and truly believe it will ever be a match?" ſaid Sir Frederick, eagerly: "Let *that* but happen! Clarence is an honeſt fellow, who will not ſee me turned out of my borough for want of money to ſupport my intereſt! Yet—now I recollect—how came you ſo *certain* of the matter? Why, it appears to *me*, that Clarence cares for no woman in the world but Arthur's wife!

"It is *you*, Sir Frederick, who have been miſtaken, and *I* am in the right!" She then poured into his greedy ears ſo pretty a *love-tale*, *founded* upon miſconſtruction, and *garniſhed* with fable, that ſhe *completely* impoſed on his ſhallow underſtanding,

underſtanding, eſtabliſhed her *own* plans, reſtored him to good temper, and, when he met his family and friends at dinner, he was not the leaſt jocoſe of the joyous party.

By ſome chance or other, Lord Clarence, that day, deſerted the ſide of Lady Ann, and ſeated himſelf next to Miſs Iſleworth who alſo came in for a large portion of his civil ſpeeches, ſo that every thing conſpired to keep up Sir Frederick's newly acquired ſpirits; and now he wiſhed for *Thurſday* and the *ball* with as much avidity as Lady Iſleworth herſelf. Lord Clarence, it was predetermined, would *then* throw off his mourning for *one* wife, and be the declared candidate for another;—in a few weeks after his daughter would become a woman of quality;—of courſe, that he ſhould borrow from his lordſhip five thouſand pounds, to enſure his borough:—views ſo captivating, whether conſidered in the light of ambition or convenience, completely ſwallowed all remembrances of paſt or preſent difficulties. Even Mrs. Snug was forgotten: ſo that the three ſucceeding days galloped along with feſtive velocity, to overtake thoſe travelling before them with the ſame poſt-haſte.

That *ſweet* luxury of quiet, *that* harmony of *nothings*, which at times and ſeaſons are the happieſt moments of *rational* creatures, never pervaded

vaded the houſe in Portman-ſquare: *there* all was hurry and riot: diſſipation vanquiſhed reſt, and ſleep could take no revenge on his foes, until they were ran down by fatigue; when, in the full face of day they would ſubmit to *his* fetters, merely to renovate their *tired* nature for *new* midnight orgies.

Arthur, in his long abſence, had written no more than one ſhort letter to Lady Ann, in which he told her *all* his money was gone—*that* ſhe muſt ſet about ſqueezing *new* ſupplies out of the *old* Peer—*that* the meeting would be over in two days—*that* he ſhould then leave Newmarket on a ſhooting party—*that* he could not poſitively ſay when he ſhould return home—*but* hoped ſhe would mean time *divert* herſelf with *his* mother and *her* viſitors; which charge ſhe did not find it in her inclinations to treat with neglect.

The project of recovering her jewels, which engendered on the turnabout brain of Lady Iſleworth, as ſhe ſurveyed their repreſentatives in her dreſſing-glaſs, was now ſettled into a regular ſyſtem, of ſwindling what ſhe ſtill conſidered as *her* property out of the uſurer's hands, by whom they were detained for value received. She knew him to be a man as ſteady to his hours of *doing* buſineſs, as *invariably* fixed in the habit of always

always *doing* it to his *own* advantage. The tranſactions of the day conſtantly ended with him at nine in the evening: her ladyſhip therefore called at his door when ſure that he would be at home and diſengaged.

Mr. Bateman received her with an auſterity of countenance, unlike the ſmiles of pleaſure that uſed to *gladden* his canvas-coloured face on former *confidential* interviews.

He was ſmoking his little dry figure by the ſide of two ſticks and a coal, the chimney being curiouſly conſtructed to prevent the waſte of fuel—his ſhrivelled limbs were wrapped in a dirty flannel gown, and his ſhaking head invelloped with a red worſted night-cap.

Such was his ſituation—*ſuch* his appearance, when Lady Iſleworth, who would not have her arrival announced, followed a boy, as much in diſhabille as his maſter, to the *ſanctum ſanctorum* of her *prudent* truſtee.

The heedleſs unconcern of her firſt *entré* loſt ſomewhat of its original eaſe, at finding herſelf very ceremoniouſly accoſted with—

"Well, Madam, are *you* come to tell *me* that I am as great a fool in *your* opinion as I am thought

thought to be by *your* huſband? Are you come to draw *my* teeth?—that is, Do you mean to perſuade *me* out of the only ſecurity I have for the *vaſt* ſums of money my *good nature* has ſupplied you with? I aſk *you* my Lady, if, *like* Sir Frederick, *you* expect I ſhall reſign *my* truſt to what yet remains *unconſumed* of my old friend your father's *hard* earned, *ill* ſpent riches? I tell you, my Lady, I will do no *ſuch* thing! So I wiſh your Ladyſhip a very good night. I have got a cold, and am going to bed—ſo I ſay I wiſh you, my Lady, a *very* good night!"

Lady Iſleworth had been ſilent to the end, that ſhe might collect all her rhetoric into one point of eloquence, with which to combat his *unpromiſing* ſuſpicions. She liſtened till he had done, without once interrupting his *angry* ſalutation, or his more angry adieus. But, ſeeing him about to ſhuffle out of the room, exerting herſelf to detain him, ſhe explained the nature of Sir Frederick's viſit ſo much to her own advantage, as to make her intereſt with the *cent per cent* miſer ſtronger than ever.

It was now that confidence took place of diſtruſt. Her eyes flaſhed good humour—her tongue was oiled with complacency—till ſhe had

had actually talked him ſo much out of his ſenſes, that, before they parted, ſhe prevailed over his caution to truſt her with her own jewels, to decorate, as ſhe ſaid, the perſon of Miſs Iſleworth, for *one* night only—*the* night of nights! —*the* night of her *grand gala!* but under promiſe to have them delivered up the *very* next morning, which he calculated would be about eight and forty hours that theſe dear depoſits would be out of his *own* poſſeſſion; for which indulgence he accepted the *ſmall* premium of fifty pounds, another debt to be added to her already prolific liſt of obligations.

Never did *woman* make a better bargain, or *man* a worſe: yet both had their ends, and both were equally ſatisfied.—The *taker-in* departed under the happieſt of certainties, carrying with her the valuable cargo of her earthly treaſures;—the *taker-in* remained behind, to grin at his *imaginary* good luck, and to hug himſelf on the *probability* that this might not be the *laſt* occaſion ſhe would have for the uſe of her jewels.

Beſides the natural ſuggeſtions of an extortioner, he entertained others of a *domeſtic* nature —*one* advantageous to the *increaſe*, and *one* to the *ſecurity* of his wealth.

The

The jewels had been borrowed for the expreſs purpoſe of giving ſplendor to Miſs Iſleworth's appearance, and promoting her marriage with Lord Clarence; and Bateman deſired any body's alliance with that *ruined* family, rather than it ſhould be united to his *own;* and, for reaſons *then* only known to himſelf, but which we are *now* going to lay before our readers, he *heartily* wiſhed ſucceſs to her ladyſhip's undertaking; he would have done more—he would have *given* it all the ſupport in his power, *money* excepted.

CHAP. XXIV.

A SHORT HISTORY.

IN the middle ſtage of his life, and in the full tide of proſperous fortune, Mr. Bateman intermarried with the younger branch of a noble houſe, which, tottering on its worm-eaten foundation, was glad to find a prop in ſo wealthy a connection.

Beſides

"My ſon," ſaid he, "let the world ſay what they pleaſe of *my* parſimony, reſpect you their opinions! If I am a miſer, *they* may deſpiſe me, becauſe they get nothing by *my* frugality: for the ſame reaſon *you* ſhould honour me, becauſe *all* I gain by *my* ſavings will be your's in good time. I am not like *moſt* fathers, who plead poverty, to make their ſons as great economiſts as *themſelves*. I have ſpared nothing on your *education*—I ſhall ſpare nothing on your *pleaſures*. You are a *gentleman*—I would have you live and ſpend *like* a gentleman! There is but *one* folly that I *never* will pardon: Marry to ſatisfy my views, and, if I die to-morrow, you are maſter of *half* a million!—Marry to diſpleaſe me, and you are a *beggar!* Once for all I tell you my mind, to avoid being peſtered with *love-tales* in favour of any needy *Miſs* who may catch you in her *toils*, and perſuade you that *love* bare-footed, is better than *love* in a coach and ſix!"

With this ſolemn charge ſounding in his ears, Percival Bateman left the preſence of his father, to call on Lord Dunſton, his mother's uncle, it being before agreed upon that they ſhould go that night to the opera, where the tempter to evil threw a ſtumbling block in the way of poor Percival, which, if it did not abſolutely break the

Beſides being a woman of faſhion, Mrs. Bateman was endowed with ſo much beauty, together with ſo many amiable qualities, that, as long as ſhe lived, ſhe not only maintained her empire over the heart of her huſband, but, by watching the growth of avarice, and endeavouring to root it from his mind, his character acquired a ſort of *temporary* reſpectability, which laſted no longer than herſelf: at her death, the ill ſeeds of a narrow diſpoſition ſprung up in their *native* ſoil, and over ran every liberal idea which ſhe, with perſevering diligence, delighted to cultivate.

One ſon was the *only* ſolace of his widowhood, and to enrich him, by every poſſible means, his *only* purſuit. He followed the golden phantom of gain, not through the paths by which probity would have brought him, though more ſlowly, to the haven of his purpoſe, but obtained it by a nearer cut—by ſtriking into a road where honeſty never travelled, and by galloping over the *neceſſities* of the *neceſſitous*, or turning them to his *own* account, he helped himſelf along in ſo ſpeedy a manner, that he greeted his ſon with this remarkable ſpeech, on the day which completed the eighteenth year of his age.

" My

the neck of all filial obedience, very much diſlocated his will to perform that part of which depended more on his heart than his duty.

Fathers and Cupid are ever at variance. Old Bateman's ſovereign contempt of his godſhip's management, in ſometimes coupling a youth, *famous* for his riches, with a maiden *famous* for her lack of them, the mortified deity, conſcious that he *ſeldom* plays theſe miſchievous pranks, and *never* but in ſport, indignantly reſolved to revenge on the ſon the ſins of his father, and that very night threw all his ſpirited eſſence into the lovely blue eyes of the young Clariſſa: his arrows he dipped in lucid poiſon, and hurled them at the devoted Perceval, who, it may be remembered, cried out, on her firſt coming into the box, "What a phenomenon! Modeſty unites with vivacity, and ſenſibility has joined itſelf with infantine graces, to form that adorable creature!"

The image of her charms, at this early period, ſo fondly impreſſed his imagination, as to make her the ſubject of his praiſe on all occaſions—even in the preſence of his father; who, taking the alarm which the warmth of his expreſſions juſtified, demanded to know the ſituation of his heart; and with ſo much cunning addreſs

addreſs he managed the inquiries, as cheated his ſon into the fulleſt confeſſion of his very natural ſentiments for the young lady, and drew from the old gentleman an *irrevocable* denunciation of wrath, ſhould he ever think of a ſerious connection with *any* daughter of Lady Iſleworth's. But, notwithſtanding all the precaution he could ſuggeſt, and that his ſon was far enough removed out of the way of temptation when her ladyſhip made her laſt viſit, yet he could not help rejoicing that there appeared a certainty of Clariſſa's being diſpoſed of before his ſon's return to Europe, thereby cutting off all poſſible contingencies hereafter.

Should my readers be diſſatisfied with this *narrow* ſketch of a *narrow* mind, I hope to bring them into good humour with me again, by running after Lady Iſleworth, and diſcloſing more of the family *ſecrets*, it being an eſtabliſhed *fact*, that *one* neighbour dearly loves to know how *another* neighbour thrives.

When people carve thrivingly for themſelves, they ſcorn to be the ſlaves of opinion, or ſtop in the progreſs of their purſuits, any more than did the wife of Sir Frederick, who, by vouching and varniſhing, againſt all good faith and honor, having *impoſed* on the *Impoſer-general* to

truſt the jewels in her hands, carried them no further than to a friend of her own, who ſhe *knew* to have lately had a good run at play, was fluſh of money, and would accommodate her wants on *immoderate* terms of intereſt, ſuppoſing the ſecurity to be anſwerable fourfold for the ſum demanded.

Seven thouſand pound had been the *original* purchaſe of the coſtly gems, on which ſhe could obtain no more than ſix hundred, beſides liquidating a debt of honor: the a mount of which altogether, left what may be called the *ſoul's* eſſence of old Bateman in pledge for a round thouſand.

She longed to buy a thouſand things on her way home, particularly the pawn-broker's watch, which had before ſo much ſtruck her fancy as a proper preſent to Lady Ann; but it being late before the negociation terminated, ſhe was forced to ſuſpend her intentions till the next day.—The ſhops were all ſhut—a diſappointment from which there could be no appeal. In her ſhort drive ſhe made out a liſt of articles to be bought on the following morning, *equally* uſeful with the watch of her idolatry: the only omitted memorandums were—the *demands* of the curate's wife, and thoſe of her two exiled daughters.

Briſkly

Briſkly entering her houſe between eleven and twelve, ſhe gaily tripped to the drawing room, and had the exquiſite felicity of finding her faro-table already arranged, crouded round by an hoſt of precious friends, who devoted ſome part of every night to the amuſement, as they ſaid, of *Lady Ann;* it being agreed, by general conſent, that ſhe *muſt* confine herſelf to *domeſtic* enjoyments, till ſhe could enter into the world by the beaten path of *preſentation.*

Lady Iſleworth drew out her purſe, threw her gold on the table, and began cocking her card, with an avidity which prevented her from obſerving, that neither Lady Ann, Clariſſa, or Lord Clarence, made up the aſſembly. Some *odd* queſtions, aſked in an *odd* manner, by a round ſhouldered witchified old woman of quality, who never opened her lips, except to make a paſſage for the bilious conceptions of her acid diſpoſition, might have rouſed her attention, could any thing have withdrawn it from her ſtake and her card.—"Pray, Madam," ſhe ſpitefully aſked, "have you brought Mr. Iſleworth to his ſenſes? Is poor Lady Ann recovered? And what, I beg to know, is become of *Sir Frederick* and my *Lord Clarence?*

"Oh, that *dear* nine of diamonds!" exclaimed her ladyſhip, "it is always my friend; I ſhould have been ruined long ago, but for that *divine* card!" She ſwept a conſiderable ſum into her pool: then, turning to her *inquiſitive* neighbour, anſwered her enquiries as deaf people pretending to hear would have anſwered them.

"Really I do not know *when* to expect Mr. Iſleworth—Lady Ann is mightily ſatisfied—Yes, yes, Madam, to a certainty Lord Clarence will come back to us again."

Arthur entered, with Lady Ann leaning on his arm, juſt as his mother pronounced the laſt word. "Well," ſaid he, drawing near the table, with a half ſatisfied half doubtful air, "I am come to make my peace with you *all:* I was in a curſed paſſion, and beg pardon that the *effects* of it ſhould diſturb *you*—not that I think myſelf much to blame neither."

Here he was interrupted by her ladyſhip's aſking, in a tone of ſurpriſe, how long he had been returned, and what he had done to offend her company?

"What

"What any other huſband would have done," he replied, "who had caught ſo handſome a fellow as a Clarence at the feet of his wife!"

"Impoſſible!" cried Lady Iſleworth, "you muſt have been miſtaken."

"No, no; I ſhall acquit the blunderer *myſelf*," retorted his unabaſhed rib, "as far as *appearances* can acquit him. It is *quite* certain, that when he abruptly broke in upon *us*, I had retired to the next room with *Clarence:* he did alſo find *that* woe-begone widower *ſprawling* at my feet; but his ſighs (ill-bred wretch as he was) were tributary to Arthur's *ſiſter*, and not to Arthur's *wife*; he only wanted *me* to be his advocate with Clariſſa. *I* was extremely angry with your ſon for making ſuch a *noiſe* about the matter: but, having ſince explained it to the ſatisfaction of *all* parties, his lordſhip is juſt now in the act of being preſented with all due forms by Sir Frederick as an *accepted* lover; ſo no doubt they will be *as* happy as lovers generally are on *ſuch* ſort of ſolemnities.

This public declaration of Lord Clarence's intention was received by Lady Iſleworth with joyful exclamations, bordering on the language of folly. From the reſt of the party it met with

with that ſort of tiſſue reception which is compoſed of *incredulous* ſmiles, *ill*-diſſembled envy, and worſe acted participation of a conceited mother's exultations, who, quite intoxicated, caught at the ſounds of congratulation, without perceiving that they iſſued from the ſource of inſincerity, and that not one, at *leaſt* of her *female* gueſts, but would rather had heard Lady Ann was detected in that amour they were all very ſure ſhe was carrying on with Lord Clarence, *than* that *he* ſhould ſcreen *her* reputation, by raiſing Miſs Iſleworth to the rank of his counteſs.

The chagrin of *ſome*, on this *doubly* mortifying occaſion, was only expreſſed, though in ſtrong enough characters, by a ſcroll which the finger of diſcontent had written on their features, whilſt others confined *their* feelings to a *ſneer*, a *ſhrug*, or a *whiſper*, ſo as to be clearly underſtood, except by the old woman who firſt addreſſed Lady Iſleworth with queſtions about her family, and ſhe bluntly declared it to be the *moſt* extraordinary well managed affair that had *ever* happened within her obſervation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

THE MIDNIGHT CONFERENCE.

LORD CLARENCE made his appearance no more that night in the drawing-room of his mama *elect*; but, after the *lover-like* interview was over, and which, in his *then* ſtate of perplexity, was ſhortened to the mere limits of *decency*, he adjourned to his own houſe, there to conſider what dangers are attendant on propenſities to *illicit* gallantries, and to caſt up the ſum total of all the penalties he was likely to pay for having *too* much indulged them.

One friend, the confidant of his lordſhip's *penchant* for Miſs Iſleworth from its *earlieſt* period, and who *alone* was privy to his change of ſentiments in favour of Lady Ann, now occurred to his recollection as the *only* perſon to whom he could apply for conſolation or advice. To this friend he diſpatched a ſhort note, containing only the following words.

" Dear

"Dear Col. dead or live let me ſee you, the "inſtant you get my ſummons! Fiſhing in "troubled waters, I am ſouſed over head and "ears. Marriage is the word! Come and "drag me out, or I ſhall be ſuffocated!"

The ſervant who carried this curious billet, was ordered to find Sir James Collington, wherever he might be; and ſo adroitly he executed his commiſſion, that after ſearching two hours, in houſes of all deſcriptions, for this every where *well-known* man of pleaſure, about half an hour after midnight he came up with him at a noted receptacle for idle young men, who have nothing in purſuit but their *own* deſtruction.

Sir James opened the mandate which commanded him to break from the joyous circle, who were that night to have ſupped at *his* expence, and without ſtaying to digeſt the contents, he bid the waiter get him a hackney coach—recommended the company to make themſelves merry in his abſence—ſwore that he was going to meet a woman of quality at her own apartment, whoſe partiality for him could be only equalled by the adoration paid to her celeſtial charms from *all* the reſt of mankind—could not ſay when he would be able to return—hoped it would not be later than two—but, ſhould he be

detained

detained beyond that time, inſiſted on their ſitting down to table, and depend on his joining them at his firſt leiſure.

A coach ſtopped at the door—he leaped into it without further ceremony—and ſoon found himſelf, not in the preſence of his beautiful incognito, but in the apartment of Lord Clarence, who, tired with pacing up and down, impatient at the delay of his meſſenger, and not knowing what to do with his own reflections, had juſt began a ſecond note to Sir James, who, he concluded, muſt have gone into the country, whether he intended to ſend it by expreſs. At this critical moment Sir James ſtood before him, and his ſpirits revived at ſight of ſo *well-tried* a champion, in whom he confided to extricate him out of the horrible involvement into which he had precipitately tumbled.

No lawyer, compoſing for the inſpection of his counſel, could be more tediouſly prolix in preparing his brief, than was the Earl of Clarence in ſhowing his complaint to the ear of friendſhip. We ſhall not follow him in all his *repetitions*, but juſt borrow ſo much from the matter and manner as will lead us, by the light of his own language, and through a ſhorter path, to the very marrow of his grievances.

He began with bitterly inveighing againſt his evil deſtiny; *firſt*, that it had made him ſenſible to the charms of Miſs Iſleworth, at a time when his paſſions were *more* deeply taken in by the *ſeeming* inſurmountable bar which oppoſed their gratification; and *next*, that it had decoyed him into retirement, where he could find no other employment than to nurſe his curſed romantic ideas, and fit him for the part of *fool* and *knave*, which he had ſince acted, ſo much to his *own* confuſion. "I never till now," ſaid the deſponding Peer, "conſidered the *death* of my wife as a *misfortune*; but henceforward *that* event will put on *another* complexion. She was paſſive, obedient, unreſiſting—I could *lead* or *drive* her as it ſuited *my* purpoſe or my inclinations."

A loud laugh from Sir James interrupted the paſſionate eulogium he pronounced on the merits of his defunct lady. "I thought," ſaid his friend, "you had ſent for me to help you *out* with the *living*, and not to hear your lamentation over the *dead!* What is it you mean, my Lord? Explain how it happens that the Iſleworths have drawn you into *their* net; for, by the contents of your note, I can underſtand nothing plainer than that you have promiſed to marry their daughter;—laſt night you ſwore to renounce the idea of this connection."

"And

"Aud renounce it I *will!*" interrupted his lordſhip, "if there yet remains a probability of eſcaping their *damned* machinations. The devil take Arthur, and the whole race of blockheads from which he is deſcended!"

"Have a care," cried Sir James, "in bidding the devil take the huſband, that you diſengage his *wife* from the contract; for, if I ſpell right, you will not be ſo ready to reſign *her* as you are to give away *poor* Arthur—and you know they are *one* fleſh to all intents and purpoſes!"

"That is as it may be," replied Lord Clarence; "I am not the firſt man, if I ſhould be ſo inclined, who, in *ſuch* caſes, have ſplit the *matter*, without confounding the *ſubſtance*. But all this hap-hazard converſation is nothing to the point. I am involved: and, when I have told you how deeply, either ſhew me a way to get out, or ſhoot me through the head. In two words, I will *not* live for *Clariſſa*, but am ready to *die* for Lady *Ann!*"

"Enough!" ſaid his friend; "ſay on, and we will ſee what can be done to ſerve and ſave you."

His

His lordſhip, thus encouraged, began as follows. "I do not know how it is, but I have taken up an *averſion* to Miſs Iſleworth, infinitely ſtronger than my *former* partiality for the ſame object, and this diſlike has increaſed on every interview with her *faſcinating* ſiſter-in-law! It happened this evening, that by ſome confounded chance or other, I followed Arthur's wife, as ſhe retreated from the company, to an adjacent apartment. We were alone: ſhe divinely kind—and I, the moſt enamoured of men, had fallen at her feet in an ecſtacy of gratitude, when the door burſt open, and in ruſhed her ſavage huſband! I felt abaſhed, but tried to look ſturdy;—Lady Ann flew to meet him, without betraying ſurpriſe or conſciouſneſs; and, for the firſt time, I found my *proweſs* ſtimulated by the ſuperior courage of a *woman!* The interloper, with a ghaſtly grin of a defiance, puſhed the elegant creature from his arms, and, without uttering a word, ran furiouſly back to thoſe *female* devils, who, I'll be ſworn, had filled his empty head with ſurmiſes on our quitting their humdrum party to enjoy a comfortable *tête-à-tête.* What he ſaid to thoſe incarnates on finding us together, I do not know; but we heard his diſtant voice, like a whirlwind, that ſwept all other ſounds before it. To make ſhort of the ſtory—Juſt as my divine miſtreſs had thought me the only leſſon which could

could be tranſlated to her advantangee, Arthur, reinforced by the preſence of his father, obtruded himſelf a *ſecond* time; and both were advancing towards me with the haſty ſteps of menacing heroes, when, without permitting them leiſure to accuſe me, accordingly to Lady Ann's haſtily preconcerted plan, I *boldly* demand Sir Frederick's conſent to addreſs his daughter, pretending that I owed her ladyſhip's condeſcenſion, in allowing me a private audience, to her deſire of promoting my happineſs, which wholly depended on Miſs Iſleworth's good opinion, and to my earneſt ſolicitation, that ſhe would grant me her attention for a few moments, to declare *my* ſentiments, as well as to implore *her* intereſt. The beſt player on the ſtage cannot perform to his own advantage, except he is well ſeconded. I was wonderfully ſupported by the abilities of my *heroine*; and our *joint* endeavours produced ſuch an effect on the credulity of our auditors, that before a quarrel *began* peace was eſtabliſhed. Arthur, if he had any remaining doubts, prudently put them in his pocket; he embraced his wife, and ſhook me heartily by the hand; whilſt the Baronet, as if by inſpiration he had ſuſpected the ſacrifice I made was not a voluntary one, dragged me from the graſp of his ſon, and, with a thouſand *fine* ſpeeches of the *honour* done to himſelf, *his* family, and I know not what—of

my

my *great* goodneſs—hurried me through the apartment occupied by the *faro-players*, to Clariſſa's dreſſing-room—ſent for her to attend him there—and, having preſented me as her *future* huſband, left us together. We were both ſilly enough on the occaſion: *I* made love without paſſion, and *ſhe* received it without attention. The ſcene was *ſhort*, yet ſufficiently *tedious*; and I broke from it to conſult *you*, on meaſures to diſſolve an engagement which, at all hazards, I am *determined* never to ratify."

"And what will you give an honeſt fellow to take her off your hands?" ſaid Collington."

"The thing is impoſſible!" replied his lordſhip, "ſhe is the vaineſt prude in nature!—Cold, inſenſible, unfeeling, the extreme reverſe of Lady *Ann*, or I might ſtill have loved her as I once *did*, almoſt to madneſs; for, in the article of *beauty*, I confeſs ſhe exceeds all the women in the world, but *inſenbility!*—curſed inſenbility!"——

"In ſpite of all you can ſay to deter me from making the experiment," returned Sir James, "I am willing to riſk any ſum you pleaſe on my perſonal ſucceſs with this cold-hearted fair one. What ſay you to a bet of five hundred that I will not

not rid you of the incumbrance, without your having any further trouble in the affair?"

"Done!" cried his lordſhip, "provided a ſingle clauſe be admitted, that, though you accompliſh what you propoſe, if *my* acceſs to the *idiot* family is *cut off* by *your* manœuvring, you pay the forfeit of a bungler."

This laſt propoſition being agreed to, and the ſpirits of Lord Clarence much recruited, he was eaſily prevailed on to accompany his friend back to the tavern, where we drop them for the preſent, to waſte thoſe hours in play or intoxication which, I hope, my wiſer male readers are dedicating to the more natural purpoſes of repoſe from the labours of diſſipation. Pleaſant dreams and ſoft ſlumbers wait upon them!

CHAP. XXVI.

AN EXECUTION.—NOT AT NEWGATE!

FASHIONABLE involvements admit *few* repreſentations of *ſtill* life. The author, the reader,

der, and the actor, are here all upona *par*, forced to buſtle along through the crowd of *changes* and *chances*, which every body muſt *know*, by experience or hear ſay, to be extremely troubleſome, though extremely natural.

Error has its origin—evil its conſequences. Folly is the *parent* of luxury; and the evil of being in debt twice as much as a man can pay, is followed up by conſequences which *might* be called diſgraceful, did not indulgent cuſtom bronze over the features of *ſhame*, and call them by the ſofter appellation of *difficulties*.

For ſeveral days preceding her grand gala, Lady Iſleworth had kept the wheels of her carriage in conſtant motion, driving from door to door amongſt her numerous acquaintance, to reinforce the ſplendor of her appearance by all the finery ſhe could collect for the occaſion, and ſeldom returned without a lading of valuable plate or china, to eke out her own rather ſcanty proviſion in theſe articles. This plan of making our neighbours *convenient* is by no means derogative to the *higheſt* conditions, or our lady of *ton* would not have adopted it. We term this borrowing ſyſtem a local taxation; by means of which, on the morn of exhibition, if Sir Frederick could not be called a *rich* man, it might

might have been ſaid *his* houſe was abundantly ſtored with the *riches* of *other* people.

Lady Ann's no leſs political than public declaration of Lord Clarence having made propoſals for an union with Miſs Iſleworth, was better received than digeſted by the *faro* party: their felicitations were not ſpared, neither were their opinions *ſhaken*. Indeed, what is there in nature ſo difficult to eradicate, as certain *unfavourable* impreſſions, when ſtamped on hearts which are moulded by malice for its own everlaſting habitation? Of courſe every tongue, authoriſed to ſpread abroad the good fortune of Miſs Iſleworth, thought itſelf equally intitled to *admire* her ladyſhip"s addreſs, who could *ſo* adroitly take care of her *own* fame, and ſo handſomely *cater* for the intereſt of her huſband's family.

Two ſuch reports, walking about town hand in hand, were, as ſoon as they could be ſet on foot, readily admitted into every circle of notoriety. But, had the marriage come *alone*, I cannot aſcertain the degree of pleaſure it might have carried with it, or the credit it might have obtained—I can only announce, that the exaltation of *one* woman being coupled with the defamation of *another*, gave to the whole an exquiſite reliſh, highly gratifying to ſuch palates as love

love to gorge on tainted reputations; and ſo greedy is this ſort of cannibal appetite, that before the ladies in Portman-ſquare were ready for viſitors, every avenue was crowded with carriages, driving at full ſpeed, as if the fair miſtreſs of each vied with the other which ſhould be *firſt* to carry their compliments of congratulation to *Miſs Iſleworth*, and to take the *exact* meaſure of *Lady Ann's* countenance.

"Not at home!"

"Mortifying anſwer!—How queer!—Deny themſelves after ſo *decided* a declaration!" Theſe exclamations, though uttered by the lady whoſe coachman, having the whip hand of many other competitors, had brought her firſt to the door, were ſo much to the ſame purpoſe with thoſe who followed and received the ſame reply, that, without having recourſe to repetition, I ſhall ſuffer them to turn from the door, and follow the porter into the houſe, there to deſcribe a ſcene of confuſion, much more unpleaſant than *uncommon*.

The old man who had taken cards from the different footmen carried them no farther than his own hall, where, laying them careleſsly on the window-bench, he aſked his fellow ſervants,

as

as they ſauntered about with all the eaſe of unconcerned ſpectators, if they were not aſhamed of themſelves, to ſee their maſter and lady in *trouble*, yet look as if they did not *care* how they got out of it? "For my part," added he, "though I have not lived with them paſſing a twelvemonth, yet my heart is ready to break, when I ſee all theſe here fine goods taken to——. Every thing muſt be ſold, I ſuppoſe; for I have heard ſay, though you cannot *catch* a parliament man, you may lay hold of whatever *belongs* to him."

Sir Frederick's valet bid him be comforted. "My friend," ſaid he, "your lamentations are all *prejudice* of education. Had you lived in as many *great* families as *I* have had the *honour* to ſerve, you would regard a trifle of this ſort no more than *I* do. Lord help you, poor man! I dare ſay you expect *we* are to cry an auction—pay *our* debts—diſcharge *our* ſervants—lock up *our* doors—and run naked into the country! No ſuch thing, honeſt David!—no ſuch thing! Such may be your *old-faſhioned* way of proceeding; but *now* times are altered—very much altered, Mr. David! *we* rather conſider it a mark of diſtinction, ſomething that ſets *us* above the vulgar, to have it ſaid *we* have more executions in our houſe than the Duke of ———, the Earl of———, or my Lord ——. I ſay David, the deeper we are in the higher we go!"

David

David ſhook his head, and the orator was put to ſilence by the ringing of his maſter's bell—a ſummons which he flew to obey with ſuch unuſual alacrity, as almoſt to convince David himſelf there muſt be ſomething *very* honourable in an execution.

When we come to take a view of the internal apartments, that inimitable ſcene, ſo beautifully deſcribed in Venice Preſerved, does not *exactly* ſtand repreſented in *all* its parts: yet we ſhall find enough of ſimilarity between the circumſtances of Jaffier and Sir Frederick, to make us ſubſcribe our faith to the *general* opinion, that thoſe poets ſurpaſs all other poets, who never turn aſide from the ſtraight path of nature, to enrich their ſelection of ſweets by the flowers of improbability.

Here ſtood the ſurly bull dogs of the law, lording it over the maſſy piles of plate; *not* of Sir Frederick's plate *only*, becauſe *many* were the families who helped to raiſe it. But *no* diſtinction of property could be allowed; juſtice had ſeized on *all*. Shall we look farther for the gentle Belvidera, to give our picture the finiſhing likeneſs? The ſearch would be in vain: it cannot be found in the ſtreaming eyes, folded hands, paſſionate acclamations, or bewildered looks of Lady Iſleworth.

On

On the contrary, no body appeared *more* fortified againſt diſtreſs, or *more* buſy in averting its conſequences, than her ladyſhip. The mountain of ſilver, on which the officers of reſtraint had laid their rapacious gripe, in *her* pleaſant ideas, ſeemed only of value as neceſſary to the ſplendor of her evening entertainment. After much entreaty, and more *ſolid* argument ſilently adminiſtered, this point being ſettled to her ſatisfaction, ſhe not only remained quiet herſelf, but permitted the guardians of her own and neighbours effects *quietly* to make out their inventory, and refreſh themſelves with the very beſt her houſe afforded.

This unfortunate accident happened at the inſtigation of a certain coach-maker, who was honoured with ſupplying carriages for the family uſe upwards of fourteen years, and, in the preſent ſtate of buſineſs, his bill amounted to ſeven thouſand five hundred pounds! "But what is that," cried the compoſed matron of the manſion, "to *our* proſpects? Is not our daughter ſoon to be a counteſs? Has not our ſon married into a noble family? Are not our other girls all handſome?—May they not expect to do as well as their ſiſter? Come, come, Sir Frederick, I ſee this fooliſh affair of the *execution* frets you! It is mighty ridiculous that it ſhould

ſhould give any *ſort* of vexation, when I ſo clearly prove every thing to be going on in the beſt poſſible train of aggrandizement for ourſelves and our children. I wiſh," continued ſhe, "you would leave off that ugly cuſtom, my dear, of trotting up and down the room, biting your nails, and counting your fingers, when one is ſpeaking to you on matters of conſequence, it has ſuch an appearance of inattention.

"Seven thouſand five hundred pounds!" repeated Sir Frederick, for the fiftieth time of repetition.—"If you expect, Madam, that I ſhould liſten to any thing you can propoſe, firſt tell me how this debt is to be diſcharged, and let it be your *next* conſideration how we are to ſupport the *future*."

"There is no earthly occaſion for *thinking* how the debt is to be paid till to-morrow! The people who have taken poſſeſſion will be no hindrance to our appearance *this* evening. *I* have ſettled it with them already: three of the beſt looking are engaged to carry round refreſhments; and, as we are obliged to hire ſuch ſort of attendants, it will rather be a convenience, than otherwiſe, that theſe men ſhould officiate."

"Their

"Their ſervices will not be wanted: you muſt, Lady Iſleworth, put off your company, or get rid of this curſed execution before it has taken air. To be expoſed is to loſe Lord Clarence; for, though he may be diſpoſed to marry *our* daughter, he might not be diſpoſed to connect himſelf with *our* poverty."

"You are ſo far right," replied her ladyſhip, ſomewhat piqued at the inſinuation; I agree, it would be beſt he ſhould know nothing of the matter, or indeed any other body. We want no intermeddlers in our affairs: and how in the world *ſhould* it take air, except by your ill-digeſted plan of putting off the company, which I poſitively never will conſent to!"

Something more than a deſultory converſation now took place between this faſhionable pair: Sir Frederick was loud, and my lady no leſs violent. It *ſhall*, and it ſhall not be a ball, was the ſhuttlecock argument, which neither of them would let fall from the ground; till, both tired of the game, each propoſed a different expedient to terminate the battle, without either being the loſer."

It was firſt propoſed by Lady Iſleworth, that, to make an *honourable* peace, and decide all differences, Arthur ſhould be called upon to join his father in cutting off the entail, which ſhe could not conſider but as mere lumber to *him*, as well as to themſelves; by which means a large ſum would be ſpeedily obtained; and, when divided, would ſerve their own *preſent* exigencies, and enable Arthur, with the other moiety, to take an elegant houſe, and to fix Lady Ann's *eſtabliſhment* proportionate to her *quality*, "In the mean time," continued ſhe, "as you are, my dear, *ſo* poſitive about getting theſe people out of the houſe, I ſhall have no objection to try my intereſt with old Bateman; and, perhaps, when he hears that Arthur is reaſonable, he may be wrought upon to accommodate us with the paltry ſum about which we have been debating."

"No," replied Sir Frederick, "neither of theſe applications are promiſing. Bateman is an incorrigible blockhead, and Arthur *never* will comply! I have made him the moſt liberal offers, and he has refuſed them all."

"Well,

"Well, *that* is ſtrange! I never heard any thing *ſo* ſtrange! There is no accounting for the boy's folly, except he has already ſold his reverſionary right to the Jews: it is the only pardonable cauſe he can poſſibly aſſign for his want of obedience."

"It does not ſignify to us what are his reaſons," ſaid Sir Frederick, peeviſhly; "but I tell you I have aſked him, and he will not do it."

"Monſtrous!" exclaimed the lady. "*So* I am not to receive *my* company, becauſe *he* choſes to be refractory, and *you* cruelly join with him to diſappoint me, merely for the ſake of contradiction! Pray, Sir, what is there ſo *unfaſhionable* in an execution that *you* ſhould deſire to conceal it at the expence of common good manners? Are not *all* the firſt families in town invited? Have I not been at a world of trouble in collecting them? And do you wiſh I ſhould put them off, only becauſe there are *bailiffs* in the houſe? A mighty pretty excuſe, truly! A charming ſubject, indeed, for a flyabout card to diſinvite people! Sir Frederick, no; I cannot ſubmit to degrade my *independent* conſequence, however *you* may be humbled in *your* ſentiments by the impertinence of a pitiful mechanic."

"If you diſpoſſeſs me entirely of dignity," ſaid Sir Frederick, ſmiling at her impetuoſity, "I hope, my dear, you will allow my *patience* has not ſuffered diminution. And, now that I ſuppoſe you to have ſaid all that can be ſaid on your ſide of the argument, let it be my turn to ſpeak, and, if poſſible, reſtore myſelf to your favourable opinion."

"Nothing is ſo eaſy," ſhe replied; only ſay you will not inſiſt that the ball ſhall be put off, and we are the beſt friends in the world."

"Nothing is farther from my intention, Lady Iſleworth, than to make you uneaſy. Even in your fit of anger, which would not ſuffer you to ſpare *me*, I was all the time deviſing means to gratify *your* inclinations, without doing violence to my own unalterable determination to have no mixture in our evening's entertainment; it muſt be a ball and *no* bailiffs, or bailiffs and no ball."

"Oh, how you love to torment me, when my heart is already burſting with ſuſpence! Pity my agony, and ſay that it ſhall be the former. Dear Sir Frederick, have you really thought

thought on any *ſort* of plan by which this *odious* debt can be diſcharged?"

"Why, yes; and it is built on the foundation of certain expreſſions which juſt now fortunately happened to fall from your own lips, when you talked of your *independent* conſequence: the lucky phraſe brought to my memory, that if you was inclined to barter that independence for preſent accommodation the thing might be done."

"What! immediately?"

"This day—this very hour, I will bring you a purchaſer, who is ready to pay down ſeven thouſand pounds, provided we jointly make over to him our life intereſt in your ſeparate property, to which agreement your truſtees aſſent is unneceſſary."

"Well, and why don't you ſend for this angel of a man, without loſing a moment's time?" cried Lady Iſleworth, with as much eagerneſs as if this angel of a man was to have made them a free gift of the ſeven thouſand pounds, inſtead of taking from them fifteen hundred a year.

"Since you conſent, I ſhall diſpatch a note to bring him inſtantly," ſaid Sir Frederick; "but have you conſidered well, and are you ſure you have your own approbation for the ſtep to which I am leading you?"

"Approbation!" repeated her ladyſhip, "how can you aſk the queſtion? It has my *whole* ſtock of approbation, or I ſhould be quite as great an idiot as Arthur."

Pleaſed that his bird had flown to the net, Sir Frederick diſpatched ſuch a billet to Iſaac Iſaac as his Lady highly extolled, proteſting ſhe was *now* ſure all impediments would be removed, and they ſhould go on as well as ever. Ah! reader, can you form *any* idea how well that *muſt* be?

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

A LITTLE OF EVERY BODY.

MISS ISLEWORTH, being ſlightly indiſpoſed with a cold, and having gone to reſt at a very late hour, was ſtill ſleeping; though her maid, eager to ſpread the news of what viſitors were arrived, had often been peeping through her curtains, hoping ſhe ſhould be the firſt to rehearſe the confuſion below ſtairs; but Clariſſa was dreaming of her lover, and all her Abigail's little devotion to break the charm were ineffectual.

Arthur Iſleworth had not been home the preceding night. He was, when a ſingle man, particularly partial to the *comforts* of a tavern, and, ſince his marriage, he had abated nothing of *that* habitual partiality.

Lady Ann Iſleworth, far from indulging any thing like diſcontent at her huſband's nocturnal flights, only *regretted* that decorum reſtrained

her

her from indulging in the ſame frolickſome amuſements. But, not to come much behind hand in purſuit of pleaſures authoriſed by cuſtom, and as morning carries no ſuſpicion on its open countenance, ſhe had therefore, at an early hour, appointed to meet Lord Clarence in the Green Park, and was gone out to fulfil her engagement juſt ten minutes before the *law terriers* ſeized on all the pretty things belonging to her mother-in-law, and from which her preſence could in no way have redeemed them.

There are three diſtinct claſſes of people to whom ſuſpenſe is the moſt intolerable of all evils —the lover, who doubts the conſtancy of his miſtreſs—the heir, who doubts of his inheritance —but, more than either, the ruined man of pleaſure, who doubly doubts whether his Jewiſh connection *will* or *can* ſave him from *immediate* ſinking into the bottomleſs pit of deſtruction! Of this laſt number was poor Sir Frederick, when two hours had elapſed, and no Iſaac Iſaac made his appearance.

Lady Iſleworth, who never would let go the airy *hopes* which, with *her*, anſwered the ſame end as *realities*, inſtead of entering into the troubles of her pale fretful helpmate, buſied herſelf in fidgeting from room to room,

charging

charging the poſſeſſors of her captivated treaſures to be careful none of them were injured by keeping them one upon another, and in giving orders to the officious domeſtics *what* was to be *done*, preparative to the evening gala.

Clariſſa's maid, ſeeing no chance that her miſtreſs would ſuddenly awaken, juſt ſtepped down into the hall to glean a little *more* intelligence, that when ſhe returned to tell her tale of horror, it might want no embelliſhment truth ſhould be able to furniſh or fancy invent.

She was beginning to enter on a moſt intereſting *tête-â-tête* with the valet, concerning their own ſituations in the family, whether it would be moſt for their benefit to take themſelves off, with the certain loſs of three years' wages, or ſtay at the *riſk* of loſing as many more? when, before the queſtion could be determined, Miſs Iſleworth's and Sir Frederick's bell both ringing at the ſame inſtant, ſummoned them different ways, and broke up the conference.

"Good God!" cried Clariſſa, wringing her hands, and lifting her tearful eyes to heaven, on hearing what had happened below, "then we are all undone!"

"Not ſo bad as that, *I hope*, Me'am," ſaid the tender hearted girl, who dearly loved her young lady, "for when I was running up to anſwer your bell, I heard her ladyſhip tell the confectioner, that if he gave ten guineas a pottle for ſtrawberries, he muſt get them by the evening."

"Ah, my poor mother? what will become of you!" exclaimed Clariſſa: "Dear, good Urſula, give me a glaſs of water!"

The water was preſented; but her hand trembled ſo violently ſhe could not carry it to her lips. Urſula, as ſhe held it to her mouth, begged ſhe would be more compoſed, giving it as her opinion, that the matter would ſoon be ſettled—a little bird having whiſpered in her ear, that a friend was coming to diſcharge the debt, and turn all bailiffs out of doors.

"And who is this kind friend?" aſked the weeping Clariſſa, redoubling her tears; "Who can it be! Is there a reaſonable man upon the face of the earth"——ſhe was going to ſay, who would involve himſelf to ſave us? But, reflecting that ſuch a queſtion could not be propoſed, without obliquely glancing on her parents' want of diſcretion, the words were ſuppreſſed, and ſhe only

only added, "Oh, Urſula, tell me what friend is coming to our ſuccour!"

"Why, Madam, John told me, as he ran out at the hall door with a letter in his hand, that he was going to carry it to Mr. Iſaac Iſaac, the rich Jew money-lender, who uſed to do buſineſs for his maſter, he ſaid, and would ſoon be here with his bags full of gold, to pay down every farthing your papa owes in the world."

Miſs Iſleworth, who, from obſervation and other circumſtances, was enough initiated in the myſtery of domeſtic involvements, remembering alſo to have heard Mr. Curry ſay, that a ruined man had better deal with the devil than the Jews, immediately formed the wiſe reſolution of applying both for counſel and aid, in her father's diſtreſs, to that beſt of men and kindeſt of friends.

She durſt not divulge her intentions, knowing they would be ſtrongly oppoſed by her mother, and perhaps entirely defeated: "Step down," ſaid ſhe to her attendant, "tell the chairman I am going out; bid them get ready, and I will be down in a moment.—I ſhall take no footman!"

"Nor chair either, I am afraid, Madam," replied the ſympathetic Urſula, ſhaking her head,

"the bailiffs will not let a ſcrap of our goods be carried out of the houſe—maſter's valet told me ſo."

Clariſſa's agonies multiplied. "Well," cried ſhe, ſobbing as if her heart would break, throwing a cloak round her ſhoulders, and drawing a bonnet over her face, "they will let *me* paſs, I ſuppoſe! The monſters will not dare to detain *me!* Do you think they will, Urſula?"

"No indeed, my dear young lady: ſhould they lay hands on you, there is neither man nor maid in the houſe but would have a pull at them, though they were ſure to be hung up the next day as high as St. Paul's!."

Miſs Iſleworth moved towards the door.

"Stop a moment, Madam," cried Urſula, "juſt let me run down and try if I cannot prevail on them to let you have my lady's chair, for it is a thouſand pities you ſhould go out after this manner."

Clariſſa ſeemed to be of the ſame opinion. She had no notion there could be any other way of going into the city but in her father's carriage or her mother's chair; and ſhe only made choice of

of the latter becauſe it was a much more private conveyance than the former.

Pity-moving, unfortunate children of vain, giddy, diſſipated mothers! if ye do not learn from your own application what *they* are incapable of teaching, in the hour of humiliation you will, no more than Clariſſa, be able to do without the luxuries which poverty may, one time or other, *force* you to relinquiſh. I therefore moſt affectionately adviſe, that you practiſe yourſelves in the uſe of your limbs as well as your reaſon; that when your *ſtate* muſt be reſigned to *neceſſity*, you may render the yoke more eaſy by putting it on with firmneſs.

CHAP. XXVIII.

ODD MAN.

URSULA ſtaid on her errand ſo long that her miſtreſs became not only, impatient but apprehenſive, and cried out the moment ſhe ſaw her, "Ah! you have told my mother, and ſhe has been chiding you!—Why, your face burns like fire!"

"No, Ma'am, it is not for *that:* I have not ſeen her ladyſhip ſince I ſaw you; and yet, to be ſure, I am prodigiouſly flurried!"

"What

"What then has happened? Can I have the chair?"

"Oh! yes; no body ſaid *nay* to *that*; you may have the *chair*, Ma'am, but *not* the men to carry you?"

"How ſo?"

"I ſuppoſe I muſt tell you all?"

"Certainly!—But make haſte, if you pleaſe, dear Urſula!"

"Why then, Ma'am, after the bailiffs had very civilly conſented that you ſhould uſe the chair, I went to look for the chairman; for you know, Ma'am, my lady has had but *one* for many months. I told him to get ready, for that you were going out. "And who is to carry her?" cried the churl; *you* to be ſure, ſaid I. "And where is my partner?"—Why, you muſt go out and call *odd man!* as you always do when you carry her ladyſhip. "D—n you if I do;" ſwearing a great oath, and roaring ſo loud that the officers, as they call themſelves, heard him quite plain, and fell a laughing, till they had worked me into a paſſion, and I again inſiſted John *ſhould* go and call *odd man!* He ſwore worſe than before, that he never would call *odd man* in Sir Frederick's family again as long as he lived, till he

he was paid the thirty guineas which it had coſt him out of his own pocket for *odd men*, from the time when his natural partner got a place in the ſtamp-office."

"Gracious heaven!" cried Clariſſa; and, ruſhing out of the room, holding a handkerchief to her eyes, paſſed through the porter's hall into the ſtreet, where, recollecting that a hackney coach might anſwer the ſame purpoſe as either her father's carriage or her mother's chair, ſhe ſtepped into one, and ordered herſelf to be driven to Broad-ſtreet.

Cloudy was the weather, but more cloudy the aſpect of Sir Frederick; he raved—he ſtormed—he kicked every thing which came in his way, *except* his lady, who, having in her *own* power the only means by which he could poſſibly be extricated from his troubles, *her* he only inwardly curſed for her total indifference to the confuſion raiſed by their joint extravagance. She never was more herſelf, more gay, more unembarraſſed, although Iſaac Iſaac did not appear, neither had the meſſenger come back, of courſe no meſſage could be returned.

The bleſſing at length alighthed where it had been ſo ardently expected, and Mr. Iſaac Iſaac was formally announced.

Whoever

Whoever has not ſeen this celebrated gentleman, might expect to hear, that the ſallowneſs of his complexion and the reſervedneſs of his manner, were the harbingers of his profeſſion; on the contrary, Iſaac Iſaac had a Chriſtian-like countenance, which held no alliance with his *unchriſtian* principles. His manners more reſembled thoſe of a courtier than a Levite—he preſſed the offered hand of Sir Frederick, and bowed profoundly to Lady Iſleworth, not like a man who retreats from, but one who flies to meet poverty in all its directions,

The deſperate caſe of his diſordered affairs being ſtated by Sir Frederick to his phyſician of finances, he ſhook his head, but the ſmile which ſat on his features when he firſt entered remained unſhaken.

A dead pauſe enſued!—Sir Frederick writhed with agony to know his fate, whilſt Lady Iſleworth talked inceſſantly of her ball, and of her daughter's marriage with Lord Clarence. At length Iſaac Iſaac broke the awful ſelf-impoſed ſilence, by mildly aſking what he could do to ſerve them?

"Something muſt be done, by G—!" paſſionately exclaimed the Baronet, "to get rid of the d—d harpies that are lording it over *my* property."

"As

"As to that, my dear," ſaid her ladyſhip, "you are *not* ſingular; *other* people's valuables are in the ſame reſtraint with our *own*. I have as much borrowed plate for my evening gala as would pay the whole debt, and yet I dare ſay *my* friends are not in the leaſt uneaſy."

"What do you expect that I am to do for you?" repeated Iſaac Iſaac.

"Conclude the bargain you offered me the other day: pay down ſeven thouſand pounds, and take the whole of my wife's property, which, when I ſhewed you the counter ſecurities, you yourſelf valued at ſixty thouſand."

As Sir Frederick advanced in warmth, Iſaac Iſaac retreated with coolneſs; he was every ſteady to his word—but money was not to be got now at *any* price; ſeven thouſand pounds was an immenſity! he could not command it—it was impoſſible!

"I admit of *no* impoſſibilities!" thundered out the diſappointed legiſlator of his country's laws and his country's independence, "I MUST have the money! and if, as you ſay, you *are* a man of your word, why you will get it for me, either from the bowels of the earth, or the bottom of the ſea, provided it is not to be met with between *this* and *heaven!*"

"Conſider

"Conſider, my dear Sir," ſaid the mild *immoveable* Iſraelite, "conſider, before you determine ſo decidedly: *great* difficulties may be overcome, *but* not ſuddenly: for inſtance—ſuppoſe I cannot, by my *own* means, raiſe the ſum you ſtand in need of, *yet*, if you are diſpoſed to take the joint bonds of three noble guarantees for half the ſum, the thing *may* be accommodated.

"I would firſt ſee you all to the devil!" cried Sir Frederick.

"There you are to blame," ſaid Lady Iſleworth; "what man in his ſenſes would deſire *better* ſecurity?"

"What man, in his ſenſes, would accept of *ſuch* a ſecurity?" retorted Sir Frederick,

Again Iſaac Iſaac was ſilent—took out his watch—and looked toward the door.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

MORE OF THE SAME SORT.

SIR FREDERICK, ſtarting from his chair, laid violent hands on his *prudent* gueſt, ſwearing by all the infernal deities, he ſhould not eſcape, till he had carved a paſſage through the hoſt of creditors, by paying the bailiffs demands, and kicking them out of the houſe!

Even Lady Iſleworth, rouſed by the terrible alternative of *ball* or *no* ball, condeſcended to unite her efforts with thoſe of her huſband to detain him a little longer.

Iſaac Iſaac, thus beſet, and by people of conſequence, had too much politeneſs to take himſelf off with the abruptneſs he ſeemed to have intended; he did more—he even liſtened complaiſantly to their renewed propoſal, of giving up ſixty thouſand pounds in reverſion for the conſideration of ſeven thouſand in poſſeſſion.

Who that had witneſſed the gradual thaw pervading the frozen determinations of Iſaac Iſaac,

or the flush of exultation suddenly raised on the cadaverous cheeks of Sir Frederick, might not have supposed that the business would at last have been settled to their mutual satisfaction; but, alas! those who borrow, and those who lend, can be the only judges how many little delicacies may start up between the commencement and the conclusion of a bargain, to impede its progress.

Isaac Isaac asked Lady Isleworth, if she had never mortgaged, on similar occasions, *any* part of that property for which he was induced to treat, by the very great esteem he entertained for Sir Frederick, and the wish he had to get them out of their present unpleasant predicament, if such a thing was to be effected at any less price than his own ruination?

Her ladyship, instigated by folly, more than governed by honesty, might have made some unlucky blunder respecting her engagements to Bateman, if Sir Frederick had not prevented her reply by the most solemn asseverations, that his wife's independent property was entirely free from incumbrances of every kind, except the d—d weighty one of having it under the guardianship of two close-fisted dunder-headed fellows, whose teeth he might as easily draw from

from their mouth as his wife's money from their purſe!

"I ſhould like to ſee and talk with theſe guardians," ſaid the cautious Iſaac Iſaac.

"I told you, when *laſt* we ſpoke upon the ſubject," cried the Baronet, impatiently, "that you could *not* ſee them, and that you muſt run all riſks, in conſideration of the prodigious premium."

"But, the hazard I ſhall run in obliging you, my good Sir Frederick—is not that too *prodigious?*"

"I aver there is no riſk!" retorted Sir Frederick.

"Perhaps there is not; but my ideas of reputation are extremely nice—wonderfully delicate! I cannot afford to lend my money without intereſt; and if I aſk in proportion to the chances againſt me, there is no reaſon why I ſhould not be ſatisfied, that no part of the property ſo purchaſed has been purloined or embezzled: therefore, Sir Frederick, I muſt either ſpeak with her ladyſhip's truſtees, or decline the negociation."

"Would

"Would you ſhew yourſelf an uſurer—an extortioner!" cried the enraged Baronet, raiſing his voice to a frightful pitch of energy: "Iſaac Iſaac, remember I tell you, that theſe muck-worms, inſtead of anſwering queſtions, would bring an action againſt thee."

"I defy them," ſaid the cunnning Iſaac; "I know how to ſecure my own ſafety; and when I have ſpoken with them, the bargain, if you pleaſe, ſhall be completed."

Neither Sir Frederick or his lady would agree to this propoſition; *he*, becauſe convinced it muſt entirely do him up with Curry—and *ſhe*, for reaſons already known to the reader, who cannot have forgotton the ſecret money tranſactions which, for ſo many years, had been paſſing between her and Bateman.

Again Iſaac Iſaac applied to his watch—pleaded an engagement—ſaid he would reconſider the affair—wait on them the next day, if he ſhould be fortunate enough to ſtrike out any other method to ſecure himſelf for ſo capital a ſum as ſeven thouſand pounds—bowed with the profoundeſt reſpect—and took himſelf off, without allowing them time to conſider by what means it might be poſſible to ſtop his progreſs.

Sir

Sir Frederick's face, at this diſappointment of his laſt forlorn hope, like the rainbow, exhibited all manner of colours. Foaming with rage, he ordered Lady Iſleworth to prepare for the country, where he was determined to take an houſe under twenty pounds a year—make milliners of his daughters—and leave the devil to manage the reſt of his affairs, for that the devil himſelf could only diſſentangle them!

Inſtead of being diſcompoſed, her ladyſhip treated his threats with as much indulgence as if it had been a *bon mot* of her own making; ſhe laughed immoderately, and very wittily obſerved, *that*, in ſuch a caſe, he muſt be his *own* houſekeeper, charging him to take good care of himſelf and his children, as ſhe ſhould certainly reſide with Arthur and his adorable Lady Ann.

The queſtionable manner in which Iſaac Iſaac had withdrawn himſelf, left ſtill a poſſibility that he might return again, the only reaſon in the world which would have prevented Sir Frederick from lifting his hand againſt the untimely jeſter; but, policy once more getting the better of his choler, he only aſked, with a ſneer—

"And how are you to live with your *adorable* Lady Ann?—a pennyleſs extravagant jilt!"

"Oh!

"Oh! ſtop your profane tongue!—I can not bear to hear my daughter, the deareſt of my friends, thus abuſed!"

"But how, I ſay, are you to live with Arthur, who has not a guinea to ſupport himſelf?"

"Like other people, no better off than ourſelves. Lady Elizabeth Lovat offers me fifty guineas a week to eſtabliſh her bank at my houſe with *petit ſoupés*, a repaſt by no means expenſive, when one has *proper* ſervants about one; which, together with our *gains*, for I am the luckieſt creature in the world at faro, and my ſhare of your property, will do mighty well; ſo let me have my ball to-night, and to-morrow we ſhall arrange every thing."

Sir Frederick aſked, with a grin and a whiſtle, with what part of his poſſeſſions ſhe would be contented?

"The half of them, undoubtedly!" ſhe replied.

"Be it ſo," cried the Baronet, "and by G— you ſhall have the largeſt half! for I will make over to your Ladyſhip all my debts, and keep the *nothing* which remains to myſelf."

The

The pleaſant raillery that was forcing its way through the poiſonous rancour of diſappointment, diſtreſs, and diſpleaſure, was ſuddenly interrupted by a violent puſhing againſt the door on the outſide, which the voice of Lady Ann could only have perſuaded them was *not* intended as a forcible entry by a creditor, or ſome ſuch hoſtile viſitor.

CHAP. XXX.

THE ART OF MAKING A LITTLE MONEY GO A GREAT WAY.

"COME along, thou brute! thou grim devil, come along!" cried Lady Ann, entering the room, and trying to drag after her an extraordinary large Newfoundland dog, with half a dozen yards of blue ribbon tied round his throat, his ſhaggy coat covered with dirt, and her ladyſhip draggled to the knees.

"What is the meaning of all this uproar, Madam?" angrily, aſked Sir Frederick, "what makes,

makes you bring that monſtrous beaſt into my apartment?"

"Dear *pa-pa!* have patience, and I will tell you our hiſtory by and bye; but firſt, my pretty *ma-ma!* lend me five guineas, to pay the naſty fellow from whom I bought my *beautiful* Diver; —it is the cheapeſt purchaſe I ever made in my life!"

"Then I wiſh," ſaid the Baronet, with acrimony, "your ladyſhip would have the goodneſs to *pay* for thoſe kind of *cheap* purchaſes, when you are inclined to make them."

"Certainly I ſhould have paid for the *charmer*, but Arthur has got all my money: I had only ſix ſhillings in my purſe, and thoſe I laid out on this collar.—Don't you think it is fancifully tied up?"

Lady Iſleworth only ſaid "Poor thing!" but looked delighted—Sir Frederick ſtamped his foot with violence on the floor, and ſtammered out, "This is too much, by G—!"

"Come, pray let me have the five guineas, that I may ſend him away!"

"Zounds!" cried her half ſuffocated father-in-law,-"give him his dog again! I *will* not, and my wife *ſhall* not pay for it!"

"Then

"Then I will make Arthur ſell his reverſion to the Jews: it is time he ſhould do ſo, when you, Sir, refuſe to ſupply me with common neceſſaries. I *can* not, nor I *will* not live, without my angelic Diver!"

"Pray, my dear," remarked the elated matron of the ruined premiſes, "if you think Arthur *muſt* ſell *his* reverſion, let it be to his father, and let him make his own terms with the Jews; for theſe ſort of people, though extremely accommodating, are alſo extremely impoſing upon young folks, when firſt they begin the world."

"It is exactly the ſame to me who has it," replied her ladyſhip, "but I will *not* ſend away Diver!"

"No, certainly!" cried her well-appropriated mother-in-law: "You muſt not regard what Sir Frederick ſays: ſomething has happened to diſturb his ſpirits, but we ſhall ſoon bring him into good humour." Then, preſenting her purſe, begged ſhe would take out the *paltry* five guineas and diſcharge her claimant: which having done, Lady Ann put what remained of its contents into her own pocket, *ſans ceremonie*.

"My dear!" emphatically exclaimed its right owner, as if to remind the giddy creature the

purſe had miſtaken its way—"My dear!"—her hand extended to receive it back, and her eyes watching when ſhe ſhould ſee it re-produced.

"Well, my *pretty mama*, what would you have?"

"My purſe, if you pleaſe, enchantreſs!"

"Ah! I can no more part from *that* than I could part with Diver! Have I not told you Arthur has taken all *my* money? I will only keep it till he has ſold his inheritance, or till you can ſupply all our wants. Arthur ſays he wants cravats, ſtockings, and handkerchiefs—I want an opera-box—I want to punt at faro—I want a bloodhorſe to carry me—aud I want four or ſix milk-white ponies to draw me through Hyde-park."

"Well, well, ſweet trifler! conſider not only *my* purſe, but *all* that I poſſeſs, as your own! And now, ſay how you have employed yourſelf this long, and, to *me*, I am ſure, mighty diſagreeable morning?"

Sir Frederick, as well as his lady, had imbibed ſome diſtant hope, that by making Lady Ann the tool of their contrivance, Arthur might be prevailed on to cut off an entail, ſo inconvenient

in

in the preſent ſituation of affairs; and the moment ſhe mentioned that he *ſhould* ſell his reverſion, he had retired, almoſt unobſerved, to ruminate at large on calculations, chances, and probabilities, as well as to keep himſelf from flying into freſh paroxiſms of paſſion, which might be detrimental to his plans on the independence of his ſon Arthur, but which he could not reſtrain in her provoking preſence.

To the queſtion of how ſhe had been employing herſelf? Lady Ann, with rather leſs effrontery than uſual, owing, perhaps, to the recollection of *certain* circumſtances, replied, "ſhe had been ſtrolling in the Park."

"What! in ſuch gloomy weather! and without attendants, when there were ſo many idle footmen who had no earthly thing to do in the family!"

"Oh! ſhe could not endure the formality of being followed! When living with her father," ſhe ſaid, "it was always her cuſtom to ramble alone at all hours—was *often* accoſted, but *never* frightened. Do you know," added ſhe, "that the firſt time I ever in my life ſaw Arthur, he picked me up, not twenty yards from my door!"

"That was extremely ſingular!" obſerved Lady Iſleworth, "and extremely fortunate!—I dote on love at firſt ſight!"

"For Heaven's ſake! Lady Iſleworth, how can you entertain ſo abſurd, ſo ridiculous a ſuppoſition? I love Arthur at *firſt* ſight! Not I, indeed! neither at the ſecond—third—fourth! or, in ſhort, at any ſight at all!"

"Well, that is ſurpriſing! And yet your Ladyſhip had the condeſcenſion to marry him!"

"O yes, I married Arthur! becauſe, at the moment he aſked me, I had no other SERIOUS lover, and becauſe I wanted an eſtabliſhment of my own."

And, that you have choſen to fix it in *my* family," ſaid the ſimpering fantaſtical mother of Arthur, "is an honour of which I am mighty proud: we think ſo much alike that we ſhall be immenſely comfortable. Has your Ladyſhip ſeen any thing of Clariſſa this morning?"

"I ſaw her only paſs along the ſtreet two hours ago, in a hackney coach, driving furiouſly."

"My daughter!—Miſs Iſleworth!—the future Counteſs of Clarence!—in a *hackney coach*, and driving *furiouſly!*" ſcreamed Lady Iſleworth —"Lady

—"Lady Ann, you muſt have been miſtaken! —the thing is altogether impoſſible!"

"No, no, I am not miſtaken! Clarence ſaw her as well as me!—I met him in my ſtroll to the Park, when we took it into our heads to eat ice at a fruit-ſhop, juſt by Charing-croſs; ſo that we had a full view of her, though ſhe did not ſee us, but looked terribly ſolemn; and Clarence would have it that ſhe was crying, becauſe ſhe held a handkerchief to her eyes."

Lady Iſleworth, ſtill incredulous, would not credit the report, till ſhe had ſent for and queſtioned Clariſſa's maid, who could not refuſe to acknowledge that her miſtreſs did go out at the time ſpecified, *and* in a hackney coach.

"The girl has certainly eloped!" exclaimed Lady Iſleworth, forgetting that ſhe ſpoke thus freely of her daughter's character in the preſence of a ſervant, "and *my* doors ſhall be ſhut to her for ever!"

"No! *That*, cried Lady Ann, "is *ſo* like my queer lord and father, that, ſhould you repeat *his* odious words any more, I ſhall poſitively run away from you as I did from him—

get

get a divorce—and marry into a leſs flinty-hearted family."

Urſula ventured to ſpeak in defence of her young lady.—Where ſhe was gone was not in her power to ſay, but was ready to ſwear, if her ladyſhip thought proper, that ſhe was gone for *no* harm—*that* there was *no* gentleman in the caſe—*that* it was terror at the bailiff's coming into the houſe, *and* not love which had driven her out of it."

Truth ſo cunningly arranges her arguments, and her language is ſo nicely adapted to *all* capacities, that it will force conviction, on the fooliſh as well as the wiſe. Even Lady Iſleworth was convinced no *great* harm had happened. Clariſſa was acquitted of every intentional *crime*, but that of the *hackney coach*; and Mrs. Urſula diſmiſſed, to go wherever *ſhe* pleaſed—either to the room of *reſtraint*, to her own room, or to the houſe-keeper's room, where all her fellow ſervants had collected together, talking over family affairs, and laying bets with each other, to be paid when their wages were ſettled, whether the ball would go on? whether, if it did, any body would come to it? and whether, after ſuch

ſuch a blow up, their young lady would ever be Counteſs of Clarence!

CHAP. XXXI.

A SHORT END TO A LONG STORY.

"WHAT extravagant whims poſſeſſes this girl!" cried Lady Iſleworth, in a voice of pique, as Urſula ſhut the door after her. "Well, I ſhall rejoice when Lord Clarence has taken her off *my* hands!" The pains it has coſt me to make her like *other* young women have been all thrown away!"

"Oh dear! I would not have you ſet your heart too much on Clarence; to my *certain* knowledge, he is at this preſent moment engroſſed by another attachment."

"Not a ſerious one, I hope?"

"What

"What in these sort of matters deserves to be called serious?—I have heard he has a *mistress*, and that he loves her *passionately*.

"If it be only a mistress," gravely remarked this *prudent caterer* for the happiness of an innocent daughter, "*and* if *this* mistress should happen to be already married, what possible objection could that be to Clarissa's acceptance of his *honourable* proposals? *All* men of fashion do the same, either before or after they have made their domestic arrangements."

Lady Ann seemed inclined to drop the argument, and began talking of the execution and the ball; which she so happily blended together as to make it plainly appear, that one *must* be the consequence of the other, because it happened just the same to three of her most intimate friends. Lady W—— Rashly, Lady Everbloom, and the Duchess of Davercheek, *would* carry *their* balls, although the executions were sent into their houses only two hours before its commencement.—She was at every one of them—never saw any thing better kept up, or spent three evenings so pleasantly in the whole course of her life."

The

The eyes of Lady Iſleworth flaſhed ſatisfaction; but, before her tongue had time to confirm it, ſhe was informed that a gentleman deſired to ſpeak with Sir Frederick.

"Is it the ſame who went away ſome minutes ago?" meaning Iſaac Iſaac, aſked her ladyſhip.

"I believe not, my Lady," replied the ſervant.

"Very well, ſhew him to Sir Frederick's ſtudy.—I ſuppoſe he comes on buſineſs, and I have nothing to do with buſineſs.

CHAP. XXXII.

THE COMFORTS OF A BRITISH MERCHANT OPPOSITE TO THE DISCOMFORTS OF A BRITISH SENATOR.

HOWEVER ſtrange it may appear to aſſert, that theſe emotions which are well known to be the deſtruction of female nerves, ſhould, from their *very* violence, aſſiſt to ſupport the ſpirits on which they unexpectedly ſeize, yet it is not the leſs true, that deſpair does ſometimes, if not always, ſupport itſelf by its own energy.

Clariſſa would certainly have fainted under her woes, on her way to the merchant's houſe in Broad-ſtreet, but for the extreme agitation of thinking how it might be poſſible to extricate her imprudent parents from their miſerable involvments.—He may be gone to the country—he may be on 'Change—or, if ſhe ſhould ſee him, for her ſake would Mr. Curry come forward to their relief?—or, was it not *more* likely he ſhould refuſe to aſſiſt them?

Between

Between hopes and fears her poor mind was ſo toſſed about, that nothing like inſenſibility could get admittance to her ſtruggling boſom, till told by a ſervant, who anſwered the coachman's knock, that his maſter was at home, when a death-like calm took poſſeſſion of her ſenſes; ſhe was forced to be lifted out of the carriage, and carried, rather than ſupported, to the awful preſence of her beſt benefactor, to whoſe arms ſhe had ſo often flown as to thoſe of a tender father, but from which ſhe would now have given worlds to retract; from a delicate conſciouſneſs, that a forced communication with a diſſipated world had made her leſs worthy of his approbation, than when ſhe climbed his knees to claim the paternal kiſs, before her infant manners were contaminated by its affectation or its follies.

Mrs. St. Edmonds had that day invited herſelf to breakfaſt with her brother in the city. They had left their pleaſant retirement at Enfield Chace together, about eight o'clock; they had already finiſhed their ſecond repaſt; and Mrs. St. Edmonds's carriage was waiting to convey her to the bank, and from thence to ſeveral ſhops, where ſhe had purchaſes to make —when, turning her head towards the door, ſhe beheld

beheld within it the emaciated figure of Clariſſa, ſuſtained on either ſide by one of her own, and one of her brother's domeſtics.

"Good God!" ſhe cried, is it poſſible than an *angel* ſhould be thus ſuffering under human infirmities!"

The worthy the godlike Curry, whoſe eye had been directed towards the ſame object, either by the *preſentiment* of his *own* feelings, or by the beginning of his ſiſter's exclamation, had ſtarted from his chair, caught the beautiful phantom to his heart, from which ſhe was ſinking upon the floor, when Mrs. St. Edmond's, with aſtoniſhment equal to what he teſtified, ſoon informed herſelf of the truth, and aided him, with the moſt eager tenderneſs, to raiſe the beautiful ſuppliant, to comfort, and encourage her.

It is not *every* deſcription of comforters that muſt flatter themſelves with the ſame expectation of ſucceſs which attended the endeavours of thoſe amiable relatives, to whom Clariſſa, the moment Mrs. St. Edmond's was announced by her brother, confeſſed the whole of her family's involvements, adding, as well as tears and ſobs would

would admit, "that ſhe was the moſt miſerable of created beings!—that if her parents, by *no* other means, could be ſaved from deſtruction, ſhe would announce her own ſentence of perpetual ſuffering, and become the wife of Lord Clarence!"

"I thought, by the account I received from your father," ſaid the beneficent merchant, "my beloved Clariſſa! that the attachment between you and Lord Clarence had been mutual?"

"Ah! no—no—no!" ſhe replied with quickneſs, "believe it not! he is my averſion, my deteſtation! It is only to ſave my father from a priſon—my mother from poverty—my ſiſters from beggary—that I will ever conſent to unite myſelf with a man ſo every way hateful to me as Lord Clarence!"

"I am glad I know your ſentiments on this head," ſaid Curry, evidently well pleaſed with her deciſion; "and now, ſiſter, tell me what we ſhall do for this dear girl!"

"All—*every* thing that can be done!" ſhe replied, with avidity! "too much cannot be done for a being ſo amiable, ſo intereſting, ſo unprotected!

unprotected!—follow the dictates of your own generous heart, and any other advice will be superfluous!"

"Ah! do not think of *me!*" cried Clariſſa, "I have not deſerved this kindneſs! Leave *me* to my fate!—What you *can* or *will* do, let it be for my father! You never ſaw ſuch wretches as are got into the houſe! I paſſed by them—their looks were terrible!"

"Say no more, my good child!" ſaid the merchant, averting his face, to conceal the tears her tenderneſs had drawn from his humane heart: "Go to Enfield Chace with my ſiſter; ſhe will take you under her maternal charge, whilſt I am doing the needful for your father; and if half my fortune can give you back your peace of mind, when I join you in the evening you ſhall have nothing to lament."

She caſt herſelf at his feet, in agonies of joy, too great for utterance. Mrs. St. Edmond's caught the ſoft infection of ſympathy—paſſionately embraced her lovely charge, addreſſing her by the affectionate epithets of "darling Clariſſa!—daughter of my voluntary adoption!" She haſtened her brother to depart on his errand

of

of mercy: a coach was called—he threw himſelf into it. And ſoon after, when a little refreſhment had been forced upon Clariſſa, Mrs. St. Edmond's, having given up her intentions of ſhopping, carried off her fair companion, nothing loath, from ſcenes of error, riot, and confuſion, to the calm reſidence of rectitude—the cradle of peace—the abode of harmony.

At the beginning of this hiſtory, it may be remembered, Lady Iſleworth expreſſed to Sir Frederick ſome fretful obſervations on the declining looks of her daughter, attended by a threat of ſending her into the country, by way of puniſhing her obſtinacy for refuſing to put on *rouge*. Now, had ſhe followed up thoſe intentions, however ſevere her motives, the effects could not but have been highly favourable to a naturally delicate conſtitution, debilitated by mid-day beds of down, and mid-night revels of voluptuous pleaſures.

Every body but the father, mother, and giddy inmates of their family, ſaw, with compaſſion, this broken lilly, daily drooping its ſweet head towards the common mother of all, as if to ſeek in her boſom the repoſe which her more unnatural mother would not allow her to indulge.

Clariſſa

Clariſſa did not complain—for, had ſhe done ſo, who was there at leiſure to liſten? Not Lady Iſleworth! Her time, always occupied about *nothing*, admitted no ſpace to the intruſion of *diſagreeable* ſubjects!—No Sir Frederick! becauſe he left the management of his children entirely to their *mother!*—Not Arthur; he was never at home!—Not his wife; ſhe thought of no body but Lord Clarence!—Not Lord Clarence; he now could think only of the divine Lady Ann! Friendſhip alone could open its ears and its eyes to the ravages of indiſpoſition ſo viſible on the countenance of Miſs Iſleworth.

The petrifying ſhock experienced by Mr. Curry as ſhe entered his dining-room determined him, unauthoriſed, to ſend her out of town; full of the ſanguine hopes, that the decline ſhe was threatened with might yet be checked, by wholeſome air, gentle exerciſe, early hours, and and aſſes' milk.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED.

MY well-informed readers, who are deeply converſant in theſe ſort of anti-ſcientific compoſitions, who can at one glance anticipate all the plans of their author, which have coſt him many an hour's labour of the mind to render incomprehenſible, will find themſelves at no loſs to diſcover, that the gentleman whoſe viſit was announced at the end of the thirty firſt chapter, could be no other than the benevolent merchant of Broad-ſtreet.

Sir Frederick ſtarted at the ſight of Curry, as if he had ſeen one riſe from the dead to tell him that his own hour was come!—he felt a pang even worſe than ſuch a command would probably have created, becauſe the preſent world was juſt then particularly diſagreeable to his feelings, and of a future world he had not the ſmalleſt conception. He might therefore, rather than otherwiſe, have thought it advantageous to

to ſettle at once with his creditors, by going to ſleep *everlaſtingly*.

In the whole catalogue of thoſe *fair* and *goodly creatures* to which his vices, his follies, and his extravagancies, had given exiſtence, there was not one he was leſs deſirous to hold converſe with than the gentleman now before him, and to whom he offered his hand with much ſeeming cordiality.

"I underſtand, Sir," ſaid the merchant, more abaſhed for the ſenator than the ſenator was for himſelf, as it happens in many ſimilar inſtances, that innocence ſhews upon her own cheek thoſe colours which ought to veil the face of guilt, ſpeaking, as it were, in theſe words: "*You are incapable of bluſhing in your own cauſe—it is, therefore, that I bluſh for you.*" ——"I underſtand, Sir, your affairs—pardon me—are conſiderably embarraſſed."

"They are! and I do not care a damn who knows it! I have now as many bailiffs in my houſe as would ſtock a county!"

The merchant ſhook his head.

"Lookye, Mr. Curry; *I* know you are come for your money, and *you* know I have it not to pay

pay—my perſon you cannot touch, and my goods are already reſtrained for more than they are worth—ſo where is your remedy?"

"Good God! Sir Frederick, are you ſpeaking in this tone of raillery to the man who wiſhes to ſerve you, who is come to offer you his ſervices!"

A remonſtrance ſo mild, ſo unexpected, ſo full of promiſe, excited effects which all the reproaches that could have been uttered would have failed to produce—it cauſed Sir Frederick to look pleaſed, and it *forced* him to bluſh!

"Give me you hand, Curry!—there is not, I ſwear," cried he, an honeſter fellow, or a more friendly man than thyſelf, in the Britiſh dominions! My ſuſpicions have wronged your noble ſentiments!—pardon the injury, at leaſt excuſe it! for, to tell you the truth, there are ſo many curſed duns coming about me, that when I only look a man in the face, I expect to hear him call out—*When will you pay me my money!*"

The man of buſineſs, ſummoned by the man of pleaſure to ſurrender his hand at the beginning, withdrew it again juſt as his ſpeech was concluded, almoſt repenting the deſperate undertaking

taking which he had volunteered; but the thoughts of Clariſſa—her bodily diſeaſe—her fatigued ſpirits—and diſtracted mind, for which there appeared no other remedy than to remove her parents out of their difficulties, made him moſt humanely perſevere in his firſt purpoſe; and he aſked Sir Frederick, though with ſome abatement of his original warmth, "whether he could propoſe any means of extricating himſelf, in which his aſſiſtance might be found uſeful?"

"There were two ways of ſerving him," he replied, "either of which would do very well."

He was deſired to name them.

"Will you reſign your truſt for my wife, and make Bateman give up his? It would effectually ſave the whole race of us from perdition!"?

"Sir, you already know my *determination* on that head!—paſs on, if you pleaſe, to the alternative."

Here was one of the Baronet's *beſt* hopes defeated; having conceived it very poſſible that, in the preſent ſtate of affairs, and with Curry's evidently

evidently generous intentions, he would certainly find leſs difficulty in giving up the property of *another*, than in laying down his *own*, to the uſes of philanthropy. But, finding his firſt propoſition ſo ill received, he entered on the laſt, and, as he thought, the moſt *unlikely* to ſucceed.

"You know," ſaid he, "Mr. Curry, I owe you two thouſand pounds!"

"Owe them to me ſtill!—keep them, Sir, as long as it ſuits your convenience!"

"I could not keep them, Mr. Curry—they are gone, ſome one way, ſome another! When a man is ſo incumbered by his family as I am, he is not able to tell *how* his money goes."—He pauſed, unknowing what to ſay next—the ice was thawed, but not broken.

"I wait your commands, Sir Frederick." ſaid the merchant.

"Gad, that is true!—I was loſt in the contemplation of your kindneſs, and my own damn'd neceſſities?—to extend the one and ſilence the other, I wiſh you would rid me of my Weſtmoreland eſtate!"

"Is

"Is Lady Bridges Iſleworth dead?" aſked the merchant."

"The devil a bit of mortality," cried the Baronet, "was infuſed into her iron ribs! You know, when he had got her almoſt under ground, what a damn'd trick ſhe played me!—how ſhe ſtarted up, like a Dutch tumbler, from the undertaker's gripe! I would enſure her death, if I could, at *any* expence: but, as I know of no office that would grant me a *policy*, dear Curry, if you really mean to ſerve me, and will take my eſtate—damn me!—do it for the work's *ſake*, and with no view to *ſurviverſhip!* Methuſela himſelf would have been beat hollow, in a race with that eternal old woman!"

"Pardon me, Sir," replied Curry, to this frothy, frivolous addreſs, "I am a plain man, unlettered in modern politeneſs; and therefore muſt couſeſs I do not clearly comprehend what may be the *extent* of your propoſals.—Be ſo good to inform me, if you mean that it is your deſire I ſhould purchaſe the reverſion of your Weſtmoreland eſtate?"

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

IN WHICH THE BARGAIN PROCEEDS.

"MY very meaning, by G—!" cried Sir Frederick: "And, being perſuaded that my aunt Bridget is determined to keep *her* holding till the day of judgment, I will let you have it at half price!—pay me down fifteen thouſand, and the Weſtmoreland eſtate is your own!"

Such an offer, made by any other body but a *maniac*, would have filled the prudent merchant with aſtoniſhment. But, having long conſidered Sir Frederick, as well as his appendages (Clariſſa excepted), amongſt that half-mad claſs who run about at large, doing miſchief in the world, becauſe they are independent of all but their *creditors*, and becauſe no body has the power or inclination to reſtrain them; being alſo aſſured, that he might now make whatever terms he pleaſed, he rather advanced to meet, than retreated from the Baronet's ill-digeſted propoſition.

"The

"The price which I was to have paid was thirty thouſand pounds, when you thought her ladyſhip——"

"Stop!" cried Sir Frederick, "not a word, if you pleaſe, of *that* curſed buſineſs! I am frenzical when I think *how* ſhe ſerved me! Had ſhe died *then*, I would have forgiven her for having lived before beyond the bounds of calculation!"

Curry waited, with extreme patience, till the paſſionate apoſtrophe was ended, and then calmly reſumed his ſubject.—"What I was, at our former negociation, ready to lay down, I am ſtill willing to give; not that I will poſſeſs the eſtate on *your* terms, but muſt have it on my *own*. Thirteen thouſand pounds ſhall be yours, as ſoon as the writings can be drawn; which, with the two already advanced, is juſt half the purchaſe money—the other half ſhall be paid on demiſe of the preſent incumbent.—Are you ſatisfied, Sir Frederick?"

"Satisfied to be ſure I am! What man would not be ſatisfied, to meet with a purchaſer who generouſly gives him twice as much as he has aſked?——Curry, I am ever thy debtor:—upon my

my ſoul I am! But, whilſt the curſed lounging lawyers are playing with my impatience, by their long form of words without meaning, what is to become of me, ſurrounded as I am by their myrmidons?"

Uninformed for what ſum the execution had taken place, becauſe Clariſſa did not herſelf know the amount, Mr. Curry conſiderately ſtopped at his banker's, and filled his pocket-book with bank-notes, to the tune of ten thouſand pounds, reſolved, at all events, to relieve the father of his amiable favourite.

In anſwer to Sir Frederick's doleful queſtion, of what would become of him between the commencement and conſummation of his dawning proſperity? he was aſſured by his deliverer, that the ſheriffs officers ſhould be diſmiſſed before he quited the houſe: nor did he retract from his word, when he underſtood that their demand was for ſeven thouſand pounds, on the ſingle article of carriages! The ſum, though large, was rather below than above the expectations on which he had calculated, taking for his eſtimate the coaleſcence of Sir Frederick and Lady Iſleworth's pre-eminent knowledge in the art of ſquandering!

A promiſe ſo exhilirating, acted on the agitated brain of Sir Frederick as ſtrong liquors are apt to do on weak heads; and, intoxicated with joy, he ventured to promiſe, what any man but the man he had to deal with would have knocked him down for propoſing—it was no leſs, than to pay down the *whole* purchaſe-money in hand! forgetting his *old* creed of Lady Bridget's *material* immortality; for, ſays he—

"My good friend! as money, I conceive, by your liberality, can be to you of very little conſequence, if you would oblige me, your ſtatue ſhould be erected in my hall, under the ſemblance of Jupiter Ammon!"

"Rather ſay of Midas, the *fool*," interrupted Curry, with a good natured ſmile, not calculated to reproach or diſhearten the eloquent pleader, who, bronzed by the hand of faſhion, and more ready to adopt the ſmile *than* the rebuke which raiſed it, proceeded, in his no very modeſt petition, with renovated energy.

"Well, have it your own way, my honeſt fellow! I will place your ſtatue in my hall or my heart by any figure you like!—I will give you any ſum—I will enter into any engagements!—

only

only advance me the other fifteen, that I may carry my borough, pay my debts, and live at my eaſe!"

"As long as you *can*, I preſume," ſaid the merchant dryly.

"True!—true!—juſt ſo, Mr. Curry! But, have you the goodneſs to comply with my earneſt ſolicitations?"

Curry had a game to play, as well as the Baronet; and the one reſigned his chance with as much gratification as the other ſeized on it with avidity, on two conditions—firſt, that Clariſſa ſhould be releaſed from the addreſſes of Lord Clarence, if her heart revolted at the alliance; and ſecondly, having firſt paſſed ſome weeks at his villa, ſhe be allowed to accompany his ſiſter to the continent, or elſewhere, for as long a time as the faculty might think a change of climate or place neceſſary to the reſtoration of Mrs. St. Edmonds's debilitated conſtitution.

"We are now," ſaid the merchant, "beginning to grow ſerious, and in bargains of this nature ſome form of agreement is always requiſite: I have provided myſelf with proper in-

ſtruments, which, by mutually ſigning, will aſcertain our mutual ſecurity. From Miſs Iſleworth herſelf I learnt what are the preſent circumſtances of your family; it was her tears—her tears of filial agony, which brought me to your relief; ſhe is now at *my* houſe, under the protection of *my* ſiſter, from whence you may command her to depart, by forfeiting your part of our exiſting agreement.

"I had," continued he, producing two papers, "meant to have offered the very propoſitions which have been made by yourſelf, reſpecting the Weſtmoreland eſtate.—I therefore ſketched out theſe memorandums, ſatisfactory to both parties, binding you and myſelf, in the forfeiture of ten thouſand pounds, to either who ſhall daringly forfeit the honour with which he pledges to fulfil his engagements. My part is already properly ſigned; it therefore only remains that you ſhould do the ſame, for which one witneſs will be neceſſary, and the bargain is concluded."

Had the moſt generous of mankind, inſtead of placing Clariſſa under the protection of a woman like Mrs. St. Edmonds, demanded her for the purpoſes of proſtitution, Sir Frederick was now ſo dead to all feeling but that of ſelfiſh

fiſh luxury, he would have ſigned not only to the diſgrace of his daughter, but to the perdition of his whole family.—A witneſs was neceſſary, and he rang the bell with violence.

CHAP. XXXV.

IN WHICH THE BARGAIN IS CONCLUDED.

THE ſervant who entered brought with him a note, which he delivered into the hands of his maſter, who, without looking at the ſuperſcription, aſked him if he could write his name? to which being anſwered in the affirmative, he was commanded to take notice whilſt Sir Frederick wrote his own, and then to witneſs that he had done ſo; which order having obeyed, as alſo noticed the form of impreſſing the ſeal with theſe words—"this I deliver as my act and deed,"—was inſtantly diſmiſſed, with orders to ſend the ſheriff's chief officer into the ſteward's room,

room, where a gentleman would give him audience, and ſettle the demands of his employer.

No ſooner was the Baronet ſecured in all the privileges money alone can procure, and of which nothing but his own breach of contract could in future diveſt him, than, overwhelmed with his tide of good fortune, he began not only to feel that he ſhould be leſs comfortable *with* than *without* the ſociety of his *good* friend, but alſo to experience much *tender* curioſity to examine the contents of his billet, which a ſingle glance had told him came from Mrs. Snug!—the faithleſs, yet ſtill adored Mrs. Snug!

Human nature will ever be human nature, whether it be more or leſs perfect or imperfect. It was natural that the merchant ſhould think he had quite enough of the baronet, as that the baronet ſhould deſire the abſence of the merchant—for this ſimple reaſon, that the good and the evil, like oil and vinegar, can never by inclination aſſimilate together, though neceſſity and hard eggs may force them to a temporary union.

Juſt as the gentlemen were taking leave of each other, Lady Illeworth learned, by means of her woman, that the gentleman who had been ſo long with her maſter was Mr. Curry—that the

the bailiffs were going to be paid off by him, and turned out of the houſe.

Elate with intelligence ſo congenial to her wiſhes, ſhe immediately diſpatched her compliments with a meſſage, requeſting to ſee her guardian, determined, if what ſhe had heard of his generoſity was *really* true, to condeſcend a little in her turn, and to treat him with civility.

She had only time to make up her mind in what manner to receive him, when he undauntedly appeared before her, followed by Sir Frederick.

"I come, Madam," ſaid he, "to receive your commands, otherwiſe ſhould not have intruded to your Ladyſhip's dreſſing-room. Having ſettled the buſineſs with your huſband which brought me, a *forbidden* gueſt, to *this* houſe, I have no ſpare moments to beſtow on attentions that are not previouſly claimed.—You ſent word you ſhould be glad to ſee me; and the leſs time you require my attendance, the greater will be my obligation."

Lady Iſleworth was going to anſwer him with ſpirit equal to his own; but Sir Frederick, eager to break up the ceremonious altercation, to emancipate

emancipate himſelf and his friend, began to rehearſe, as faſt as he could utter, how much they were both indebted to Mr. Curry, and how much it behoved her ladyſhip to unite with him in returning their hearty acknowledgments.—"I am ſure," ſaid he, "the devil would have flown away with me, if this, my better genius, had not ſnatched me from his infernal clutches!"

The merchant, either mortified at the evil name coupled with his good works—too modeſt to delight in his own praiſes—or fearful to encounter the rage of Lady Iſleworth, ſhould her huſband proceed to the recitation of certain conditions, would inſtantly have made his eſcape; but ſhe herſelf impeded his haſte, by the gracefulneſs of her advances, and the graciouſneſs of her ſolicitations.

"Indeed, my dear Sir," cried her ladyſhip, "ſince you have been ſo mighty obliging to Sir Frederick, you *muſt* not, nay, you *ſhall* not leave us, till you have heard what I have to ſay for myſelf."

Curry, ſtill on his feet, made his bows, but ſaid nothing.

"Recollect how often you have heard my father declare, that I was the ſweeteſt diſpoſition in

in the world!—and ſo I am, in every thing but *one*—I like to have my *own* way in the management of my *own* children."

"And finely they have been managed, by G—!" exclaimed the Baronet; "in future I ſhall take the conduct of Clariſſa to myſelf," winking ſignificantly to his colleague.

"I believe we ſhall not have long to diſpute on *that* ſubject," replied her peaceably diſpoſed ladyſhip, "a few weeks, and another will ſupercede my authority as well as yours——Pray," added ſhe, exultingly, "have you told my truſtee what my cleverneſs has done for the eſtabliſhment of Clariſſa? who, being but a ſort of milk and water compoſition, may think herſelf very well off to be a counteſs!"

Sir Frederick, who had been ſo anxiouſly looking forward to the ſame event, yet, having renounced it by his late engagement, would have imprecated a thouſand curſes on his own head, if the merchant's penetrating eyes could have been prevailed upon to make their inquiſitive reſearches in any other direction than over the ſurface of his changing countenance, whereon they dwelt with immoveable fixedneſs; and he only replied to his wife's queſtion—"that Mr.

Mr. Curry knew of Lord Clarence's pretenſions."

"And an't you vaſtly happy?" cried ſhe, "I am ſure you muſt be moſt amazingly happy at Clariſſa's good fortune!"

"I ſhall rejoice, indeed," ſaid he, "when I hear, from her own declaration, that ſhe has walked by choice, and not being dragged by authority, into the regions of felicity!"

"Only hear him, Sir Frederick!—ſtill the ſame unfaſhionable ideas!—the ſame antediluvian notions!"

"Never, Madam, will you ſee me caſt off my old principles, till you can convince me their ſubſtance is loſt—that it is time I ſhould get new ones; and alſo, that the new ones muſt be *modern*; when I ſhall be proud to conſult your ladyſhip's taſte in my choice, as the very beſt of its *kind* to which I can apply for directions!"

Swallowing the bait without perceiving the hook—that is to ſay, conſtruing into a compliment what was meant as a cenſure, he ſeemed to

to have entirely re-inſtated himſelf in her favour —ſhe increaſed her civility—ſhe increaſed her loquacity!

Sir Frederick every moment grew more and more impatient to examine the contents of his adorable Mrs. Snug's *billet-doux*, not ſo much from the violence of inclination, as from the violence of curioſity, of apology that dear perfidious could make, for an abſence which, in ſo many attendant circumſtances, exactly reſembled an elopement with a young daſhing ſprig of quality, whoſe head ran upon the ladies, and his wheels on the four aces.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.